

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #55 / June 26, 2020

Good Afternoon,

As always, the well-being of you and your communities is top of mind. The Province of BC is now officially in **Phase 3 in BC's COVID-19 restart plan**, which means non-essential travel is allowed throughout the province. Although Phase 3 is a go, British Columbia has also extended the provincial state of emergency to July 7.

While some towns, communities and regions who rely on tourism are eager to welcome BC visitors with safety measures in place, others might be hesitant to welcome visitors this summer and people will need to respect that. As Dr. Shannon McDonald of the FNHA cautioned earlier in a **press conference today**, this is no time to lower our guard. "The curve has flattened, but it has not flatlined. If we relax our precautions too quickly, we could see a surge in cases." She also said that we must continue to follow measures "for the sake of the most vulnerable among us, especially our Elders, our language holders, and our knowledge keepers."

We encourage everyone to continue to follow the advice of Dr. McDonald, Dr. Bonnie Henry and other public health officials: wash your hands, practice physical distancing, avoid gathering in large numbers, and consider wearing a non-medical mask when in places where physical distancing is not possible. Stay safe, stay calm and be kind.

Don't bring the COVID virus home



Help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities. Learn how to wear a non-medical mask or face covering properly.



UPDATES

FNHA releases its COVID-19 report

On June 26, Dr. Shannon McDonald, FNHA's Acting Chief Medical Officer, and Dr. Bonnie Henry, BC's Provincial Health Officer, released data and reporting on cases of COVID-19 within First Nations, and provided an overall update on COVID-19 and how it has affected First Nations communities and Indigenous people in BC.

Between January 1 and June 14, partner health authorities tested 5,434 First Nations for COVID-19. To date, 86 First Nation individuals in BC tested positive for COVID-19, of which 42 live on reserve. In total, 19 First Nations were hospitalized, although no patients remain in hospital. Of those who fell ill, 81 have recovered. Sadly, there were three First Nations deaths.

The FNHA has responded to community direction by sourcing and distributing 715,000 pieces of Personal Protective Equipment to frontline health care workers, launching the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day tele-health service, and supporting the rollout of a provincial framework to help people living in rural, remote and First Nation communities in BC access critical health care among other initiatives.

You can read the full report [here](#).



INDIGENOUS GRAD 2020 – JUNE 26, 5 PM

Congratulations to all the Indigenous graduates of 2020, from kindergarten, middle school, high school, college and university! While the COVID-19 pandemic has made it more difficult to celebrate, a unique online and social media campaign is recognizing the success and determination of this year's Indigenous graduates. Use the hashtag #IndigenousGrad2020 on the social media platform of your choice to let them know how proud you are of their accomplishments. The virtual ceremony begins at 5 pm and will be showcased on APTN.



New guidance for Indigenous communities close to natural resource operations and for Industry in natural resources sectors

COVID-19 can spread when workers are exposed to the virus at work then return to their local communities, or from interactions between workers and members of Indigenous communities (through support and supply chains, lodging and food and other services) in natural resources sectors like energy, mining/resource extraction, and forestry.

ISC has added two new resources to its website to help guide Indigenous communities and industry during the pandemic:

- The public health measures outlined in **Protecting the health and safety of Indigenous Communities in close proximity to natural resource operations: Guidance for Indigenous communities** are a useful resource to consider, in addition to any guidance or measures put in place by the Province of BC.
- **Guidance for industry in Canada's natural resource sectors to protect the health and safety of workers and nearby communities** provides practical guidance to industry on public health measures to reduce the potential for the spread of COVID-19 within Indigenous communities that are near resource sector operations. Employers and local community leaders are encouraged to engage frequently with one another and provincial/territorial public health officials to ensure all parties are kept informed of developments. It is also important for industry to

align this guidance with the provincial guidance recommended by the public health authorities, Labour code, and occupational health and safety standards in the jurisdiction where the operation is functioning.

Statistics Canada survey results on the effects of COVID-19 on Indigenous people and mental health

From April 24 to May 11, 2020, approximately 1,400 First Nations people, Métis and Inuit aged 15 and older participated in an online questionnaire "Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians: Your mental health." Statistics Canada has recently released its crowdsourcing data collection on **Indigenous people and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**. This is the third of a series of releases focusing on the economic, social and health challenges facing Indigenous people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A first Daily article examined **health and social characteristics** associated with a higher risk of contracting or spreading the COVID-19 virus among Indigenous people living in rural, remote and northern communities. A second article focused on **vulnerabilities to socioeconomic impacts among Indigenous people living in urban areas**. Over the coming weeks, Statistics Canada will continue to report on the impacts of the current pandemic among Indigenous people, as Canada gradually enters a recovery phase.

Canada Student Service Grant launched

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced on June 25 the **launch of the Canada Student Service Grant (CSSG)**, which will support post-secondary students and recent graduates as they volunteer to serve in their communities' COVID-19 response and gain valuable experience at the same time. The CSSG will provide these volunteers with a one-time payment of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 based on the number of hours they serve. To find not-for-profit organizations looking for help during the pandemic, post-secondary students and recent graduates can use the new **I Want to Help** platform, which also launched on June 25.

The CSSG and I Want to Help platform are part of the **nearly \$9 billion in support for post-secondary students and recent graduates** announced by the Government of Canada on April 22, 2020.

PARTNER INFORMATION

Province opens applications for infrastructure funding to build stronger communities

BC is now accepting applications from local governments, community groups and First Nations for **nearly \$160 million in infrastructure grants to help strengthen communities** throughout British Columbia.

Project criteria support a wide range of infrastructure needs and priorities, including broadband connectivity, efficient and reliable energy, Indigenous health and educational facilities, local public transit and reliable road, air or marine infrastructure, as well as improved resilience to natural disasters and environmental quality.

Local governments and Indigenous communities, as well as for-profit (Rural and Northern Communities only) and not-for-profit organizations, are encouraged to submit applications for these programs, through the **Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program**.

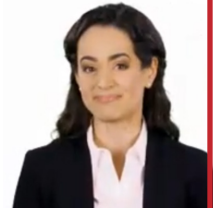
NEW SURVEY

Statistics Canada has launched a survey to measure the impacts COVID-19 is having on Canadians living with long-term conditions and disabilities. The information will help decision makers implement appropriate support measures during and after the pandemic.

[Click here to participate.](#)

THE CANADA REVENUE AGENCY (CRA) OUTREACH PROGRAM

Help make sure your members are getting the benefits and credits they are entitled to. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CRA outreach officers are available to help you. **Complete the online form** to make arrangements for a presentation by phone. For other ways to file your taxes, go to **doing your taxes**.



ISC COVID-19 SURVEY

On June 25, Indigenous Services Canada reached out with a survey to all First Nation communities in BC to follow-up on items raised to the Department during COVID-19.

The first set of questions are BC Region specific. Questions can be answered via email or through a scheduled call with your Funding Services Officer.

The second set of questions are being asked nationally and relate to the Indigenous Community Support Fund. Responses are being collected through SurveyMonkey using an unique community identifier.

Responses to both sets of questions are due by Friday, July 3, 2020. If you have not received the questionnaire, please contact your Funding Services Officer.

NATIONAL INFORMATION

- **Accessing student financial benefits and support during the COVID-19 outbreak**
- **Accessing financial benefits and support during the COVID-19 outbreak**
- **On-line Resources for Indigenous Communities – Food and COVID-19**
- **Service Canada Programs and Services – for youth**
- **Service Canada Programs and Services – for seniors**
- **Service Canada Programs and Services – for businesses**
- **Practical advice, articles and information to help you #GetReal about how you really feel**
- **Taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks**
- The Government of Canada has made announcements regarding financial assistance for those who will be impacted during these unprecedented times – these individuals and business are encouraged to apply for assistance. You can find further information on how to apply for financial or economic support at: Canada.ca/coronavirus and [Questions and Answers on the Canada Emergency Response Benefit](#).
- **Public Health Agency of Canada**
- **Resources for Canadian Businesses**
- **Transport Canada – COVID-19 measures, updates, and guidance issued by Transport Canada**

USEFUL LINKS

- For information about economic measures to help stabilize the economy, please visit the **federal** and **provincial financial supports** websites often for the latest information.
- First Nations Health Authority – **Information for community leaders**
- **COVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool**
The app will let you receive the latest updates, trusted resources, and alerts. The Self-Assessment Tool is built in.
- With the help of BCFC, the First Nations Public Service Secretariat has posted a **COVID-19 Resources for All BC Individuals**.

REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests: aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

