

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #80 / May 5, 2021

This update and earlier editions are also available on the **First Nations Public Service Secretariat website**.



Good afternoon,

We hope this update finds you and your communities staying safe and well. Even with the roll out of vaccines in First Nations and to Indigenous peoples in urban areas, we know these continue to be challenging times. We note that this year's **Mental Health Week** organized by the Canadian Mental Health Association focuses on how naming, expressing, and dealing with our emotions – the ones we like and the ones we don't – is important for our mental health.

We're so appreciative the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) is responding with facts, with services, and with compassion. This **YouTube video** by Dr. Nel Wieman, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, FNHA, on Mental Health and the COVID-19 Pandemic looks at why many of us have struggled.

The FNHA has also provided the following links based on the themes of this year's Mental Health Week to help us get informed, get help, and support others:

- **Mental Health and Cultural Supports During COVID-19**
- **Youth and COVID-19**
- **Keeping Well and Staying Connected during COVID-19**
- **Practicing Self Compassion**
- **Techniques for Grounding**

And, finally, because we believe we are better when we share our knowledge, please see these resources on mental health being offered by communities:

- **Okanagan Indian Band** shared a short animation on "**The Power of Empathy**." As you'll see, what makes something better is the power of connection.
- Additionally, **Westbank** shared an article "**Healing Water**" looking at the reassurance we can take from the change of seasons and the hopeful signs of renewal, of re-growth.

May 3-9, 2021
#GetReal about how you feel.

Mental Health Week

In times of extreme anxiety and stress, mental health is something we can protect, not just something we can lose. Heavy feelings lighten when you put them into words. When we voice our emotions, the pain gives way. So, let's understand and name how we feel. Angry? Glad? Frustrated? Sad? This Mental Health Week, don't be uncomfortably numb. #GetReal about how you feel. Name it, don't numb it.

How can you
help protect your community?



UPDATES

Registration and Status Card Updates

In response to questions from leadership about children's wait time for registration, we want to share that BC Region has made significant progress since our return to the workplace on processing registration applications received at the Vancouver office and we are currently working on applications received in January 2021.

As well, anyone who is waiting for their application to be processed can request priority consideration for urgent medical or education reasons. To do so they need to write to aadnc.infopubs.aandc@canada.ca and include supporting information, such as a medical note or proof of acceptance at a post-secondary institution.

Please be assured that we are also continuing our efforts to further reduce the existing inventory of registration applications and have prioritized birth registrations to ensure they receive priority over other life events.

In addition, please share with your members that there are two options for health coverage for children until they are registered:

- The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) Health Benefits Program is available to infants (up to 24 months) if at least one parent is eligible for the program. More information is available at www.fnha.ca/benefits/eligibility.
- **Jordan's Principle** makes sure all First Nations children living in Canada can access the products, services and supports they need, when they need them. Funding can help with a wide range of health, social and educational needs, including the unique needs that First Nations Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA children and youth and those with disabilities may have. To find out more, contact your **regional focal point**. Or call, 1-855-JP-CHILD (1-855-572-4453).

Budget 2021: Strong Indigenous communities

Through Budget 2021, the federal government is proposing **a historic, new investment of over \$18 billion over the next five years, to improve the quality of**

HELP PROTECT YOUR MEMBERS FROM IDENTITY THEFT

In 2009, a more secure status card, the Secure Certificate of Indian Status, began to be issued to help protect registered persons from identity theft. Registered persons are encouraged to apply for the Secure Certificate of Indian Status, which has a number of **security features** that the Certificate of Indian Status lacks.

Please **visit our website** to find out how to apply for a Secure Certificate of Indian Status (secure status card) or Certificate of Indian Status (status card).

life and create new opportunities for people living in Indigenous communities. This work is essential to make sure our recovery includes everyone and makes all communities more resilient.

Working with Indigenous partners, these investments will make significant strides in closing gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, support healthy, safe, and prosperous Indigenous communities, and advance meaningful reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation. Some of the priorities identified in Budget 2021 include: supporting Indigenous communities in the fight against COVID-19; improving health outcomes in Indigenous communities; supporting a distinctions-based mental health and wellness strategy with First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation; responding to the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Calls for Justice*; building on the existing distinctions-based approach to Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care with a long-term investment; investing in infrastructure in Indigenous communities, and supporting Indigenous secondary and post-secondary education.

Second edition of Federal/Provincial/Territorial Response Plan for Ongoing Management of COVID-19 released

The second edition of the *Federal/Provincial/Territorial Response Plan for Ongoing Management of COVID-19* **has been released**. The document was developed in collaboration with federal, provincial and territorial public health officials, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis partners, health system partners, and other stakeholders. It provides a common forward planning approach for the ongoing management of COVID-19 in Canada.

The plan acknowledges jurisdictional roles and responsibilities, identifies when pan-Canadian approaches are anticipated, and when provincial and territorial flexibility and customization are expected. Partners are working together to ensure all Indigenous peoples, regardless of where they live, have access to support throughout the pandemic response, including prioritization for vaccines.

PARTNER INFORMATION

BC Expanding vital mental health, substance use services to help young people thrive

Through BC Budget 2021, the Province is pledging to invest in **integrated and expanded mental health and substance use services in communities** for children, youth and their families who will benefit from over \$56 million in new supports.

Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Sheila Malcolmson, said the Province is adding new teams so young people receive seamless service at school, at home and for life. The integrated child and youth teams will identify early when a young person needs support and connect them to specific mental health and substance use services. This model of care is meant to reduce wait times, improve health outcomes and increase engagement at school.

BC is working across ministries, with Indigenous partners and community agencies to build a culturally safe system of care that benefits young people and

FIRST INTAKE OF FIRST NATIONS WELL-BEING FUND STILL OPEN

First Nations throughout BC can **apply for funding to promote well-being, improve quality of life for community members on and off reserve**, and find solutions to poverty in their communities.

Applications are still being accepted through the **First Nations Public Service Secretariat** until 11:00 p.m. (Pacific time) on Sunday, May 30, 2021.

STILL TIME TO APPLY FOR THE BC RECOVERY BENEFIT

The **BC Recovery Benefit** is a one-time direct deposit payment for eligible families, single parents or individuals. Benefit eligibility is based on net income from your 2019 federal tax return. Members must apply before June 30, 2021 to receive the benefit.

BENEFIT RATES

The amount you're eligible for will be automatically calculated based on your net income.

Applicants must complete a federal 2019 income tax return to receive the benefit.

their families in communities throughout British Columbia. These programs, which are complemented by partnerships between the ministries of Education, Children and Family Development, and Mental Health and Addictions, will help build capacity in communities and place mental health and wellness front and centre for students, parents and educators.

This investment is part of the overall \$97 million announced in BC's Budget 2021 for child and youth mental health and substance use supports.

Mental Health Resources for Youth

Here2Talk provides all students currently registered in a BC post-secondary institution with free, confidential counselling and community referral services, 24/7 via app, phone and web.

YMCA of Greater Vancouver offers **free mindfulness online workshops** for teens (age 13-17) and youth (age 18-30). They also have many YMCA at Home videos on **their YouTube channel** that focus on mental health and meditation.

BounceBack is a free skill-building program designed to help adults and youth 15+ manage low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress or worry. Delivered online or over the phone with a coach, you will get access to tools that will support you on your path to mental wellness.

Foundry offers young people ages 12-24 health and wellness resources, services and supports – online and through integrated service centres in communities across BC. They are now offering virtual drop-in counselling sessions by voice, video and chat to young people and their caregivers.

And, to help you help the young people in your lives who may be struggling with their mental health during the pandemic, the **Kids Help Phone** has some tips for supporting them.

Emergency Preparedness Week

Emergency Preparedness week also takes place May 2-8. As shared by the **Westbank First Nation**, the Central Okanagan Emergency Operations has compiled **information on how best to prepare** for any emergency which begins with setting aside some time to plan.

Particularly at this time of year, emergencies might include high water and flooding near creeks, streams and lakes across the region. Then, as we move into the drier, summer months, the risk of wildfire increases. Other potential emergencies include destructive windstorms, gas leaks, noxious fumes or structure fires that result in people being evacuated from their homes.

A few simple steps can make the difference for families and individuals to be prepared for the different type of emergencies they could face – anytime, anywhere.

DID YOU KNOW? THE NEXT CENSUS OF POPULATION WILL TAKE PLACE IN MAY 2021

Census information is used to make informed decisions.

Please encourage your members to participate.

Additionally, Statistics Canada is currently hiring approximately 32,000 people for census enumerator and crew leader positions across Canada. For more information on the jobs available for the 2021 Census and the hiring process, please visit the **2021 Census jobs FAQ**.

- **Know the risks.** Knowing the risks specific to your community and your region can help you better prepare.
- **Make a plan.** It will help you and your family know what to do.
- **Get an emergency kit.** During an emergency, some basic supplies may be required. You may need to get by without power or tap water. Be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours in an emergency.

With the spring freshet underway and the upper elevation snow still to melt, any community that has had flooding or high water issues in the past, should have the tools and equipment ready to protect against possible damage.

For additional resources on Emergency Preparedness, Prevention, and Emergency Evacuee Guidance please visit **EMBC**.

For information regarding Emergency Management Preparedness for individuals and families, visit **Public Safety Canada's website**.

Finally, if you have questions regarding ISC programs or funding supports related to emergency management and planning, please email bcaandc.do@canada.ca.

BC Explains Enforcement of Non-essential Travel Restrictions

On the advice of B.C.'s provincial health officer (PHO), Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, issued an *Emergency Program Act* order to **prohibit non-essential travel** between three regional zones in the province. The primary goal of the order is education and reminding people about travel restrictions. The regional zones are:

1. Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley (Fraser Health and Coastal Health regions);
2. Vancouver Island (Island Health region); and
3. Northern/Interior (Interior Health and Northern Health regions).

The province will also authorize site-specific, clearly marked police road checks to further curb recreational travel.

Police may conduct periodic road checks at key travel points and violators could be issued \$575 fines. Police can ask the driver of a vehicle for the reason for their travel, along with their name, address, license and secondary identification if an individual has recently moved. Documentation proving the reason for travel will not be required, and vehicle passengers will not be asked for documentation.

INFRASTRUCTURE CANADA CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE NEW GREEN AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS PROGRAM

Infrastructure Canada is currently accepting applications for retrofits and new building projects for community buildings. Applications are being accepted on an ongoing basis for projects under \$3 million and until July 6, 2021 at 23:59 PDT for projects from \$3 million to \$25 million.

For more details please see the [Infrastructure Canada website](#).

The road checks may be put in place at any time until the order is lifted at 12:01 a.m. on May 25, 2021 (after the May long weekend). The road checks may be set up on highway corridors that connect different regions of the province to remind travellers of the order.

For more information, please visit [Travel and COVID-19 – Province of British Columbia](#).

BC announces \$500-million investment fund to pave way for a StrongerBC

The BC government has introduced legislation to support the operations of InBC Investment Corp. Developed in consultation with the business and investment sectors, InBC will focus on driving innovation, sustainability and inclusiveness into BC's economy. InBC will be designed to attract investment, create family-supporting jobs and diversify B.C.'s economy.

InBC will invest in high-growth potential businesses in British Columbia and leverage investments from the private and public sectors to help businesses grow. InBC will have a "triple bottom line" investment mandate, aiming to:

- establish B.C. as a globally competitive low-carbon jurisdiction;
- promote values that make life better for people in B.C., including job creation, advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, promoting diversity and inclusion; and
- achieve a financial return on investment.

The fund is a major initiative under StrongerBC: BC's Economic Recovery Plan.

Youth to Create Wellness Kits

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) is collaborating with **youth to create wellness kits** for Indigenous youth in BC aimed at promoting self-care in the midst of the pandemic.

The wellness kits include necessities such as blankets, water bottles and traditional medicines, as well as art supplies, recipes and language cards. "The wellness kits are by the youth, and for the youth and just supported by us," says Adam Gauthier, a child and youth coordinator for the FNHA.

The idea of wellness kits was born when Gauthier was working as a youth wellness coordinator for the Songhees First Nation. Since then, the concept has expanded to include two Friendship Centres, 20 Coast Salish Nations and three Delegated Aboriginal Agencies. So far, more than 200 wellness kits have been created, with 100 to be delivered in May and another 100 in June.

Each recipient Nation has identified their youth population, including those living in community and those living away-from-home. The kits will also be delivered to those who are not living with their families, including youth living in foster care.

Should you want further information, please contact Adam Gauthier at adam.gauthier@fnha.ca or 604-341-8915.



HELP FOR MEMBERS SEEKING BENEFITS!

Getting the benefits like the **Canada child benefit**, the **Canada workers benefit** and the GST/HST credit is now easier.

The new forms are easy to complete, and there is support to help you.

For more information or help filling out the forms, call 1-855-214-7070.

Does your mask fit properly?



A properly fitting mask can protect you and others from getting COVID-19. A proper mask should have multiple layers, completely cover the nose, mouth, and chin, and fit snugly over the lower face so there are no gaps or air leaks between the mask and your skin.

[DOWNLOAD THE INFOGRAPHIC](#) 

USEFUL LINKS

- **COVID-19 vaccines and Indigenous peoples**
 - » **COVID-19 vaccines: get the facts**
 - » **Moderna COVID-19 vaccine: what you should know**
 - » **Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine: what you should know**
 - » **Canada's COVID-19 Immunization Plan**
- **COVID-19 Awareness Resources and Videos**
 - » **COVID-19: How vaccines are developed (video)**
 - » **Vaccine development and approval in Canada (infographic)**
 - » **What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine for Canada (poster)**
- **Taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Protect your health and your community** – Preventing infection, handwashing and drinking water advisories, how to prepare, what to do if you are sick or caring for someone sick
- 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.
- **New financial support** – Developed by ISC, this page provides financial support information for Indigenous individuals, students, businesses, organizations and communities.

REGIONAL CONTACTS

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

- **Acting Regional Director General**
Bill Guerin / 604-803-9476
- **Acting Associate Regional Director General**
James Moxon / 604-367-8241
- **Director, Community Infrastructure**
Paula Santos / 604-790-8451
- **Director, Programs and Partnerships**
Wendy Rogers / 604-363-8117
- **Director, Lands and Economic Development**
David Russell / 604-817-2644
- **Director, Funding Services**
Jody Kaden / 236-334-4742
- **Director, Child and Family Services**
Chiara Taylor / 778-668-9067
- **Acting Director, Community Development**
Laura Aucoin / 778-239-8547
- **Director, Corporate Services**
Harold Powell / 604-219-1737

Should you have any COVID-19 health-related questions, the First Nations Health Authority would like you to use the following:

- For general inquiries: covid19needs@fnha.ca
- For FNHA and community health care providers (CHNs, HD, etc.) or CDE planning questions: CDMgmt@fnha.ca
- For individual health care and COVID-19 questions: 811 or primary care provider or contact the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day 1-855-344-3800 or email virtualdoctor@rccbc.ca.

Should you have any questions regarding the Emergency Management Assistance Program, please contact our Duty Officer at 604-209-9709 or bcaandc.do@canada.ca.