

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #29 / April 27, 2020

Good Afternoon,

The well-being of you and your communities continues to be top of mind for all of us at ISC BC Region. As you may have seen reported, a First Nation community has suffered its first passing of a member due to COVID-19. We send our deepest condolences to the community and the broader community of First Nations in British Columbia. This is not the news any of us wanted to hear and grieving at this time of physical distancing adds another layer of grief and loss. Please stays strong, stay vigilant in your efforts to stop the spread of this disease. We will continue to work with you to do what we can to assist in your efforts to protect your communities.

Stay the course
help limit the spread of COVID-19



Please watch this animated video:
Physical distancing: Stop the spread of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities



UPDATES

On Saturday, Minister Miller joined other Government of Canada Ministers and officials to provide an update on COVID-19. He noted that over the last week, First Nations have seen an increase in the case counts with 95 confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported on reserve nationally, as of April 24.

He thanked Indigenous leadership for their support of actions that have proven to be the most effective means of slowing the spread of the virus: namely, hand washing, physical distancing, no large or even small gatherings, self-isolation and active identification of symptoms.

Assistance for First Nations Students

Further to the Prime Minister's announcement Friday of \$75.2 M in support for Indigenous students as part of the **Canada Emergency Student Benefit**, Minister Miller noted that this new funding is over and above the base funding each Indigenous distinctions based program receives to support post-secondary education and will cover costs such as support for living, travel, counselling

and other support expenses to ensure the success of Indigenous students.

This funding also supplements other student support measures announced last week. Indigenous students can access all of the other student supports that fall within the larger COVID-19 economic response plan for post-secondary students including the **new Canada student service grant and the enhanced Canada student loans program**.

Additionally, BC students can benefit from additional funding through **The Indigenous Emergency Assistance Fund**. Students can apply for this funding through their institution's Indigenous Affairs Office.

Indigenous Community Support Fund: Urban and off-reserve Indigenous organizations and communities

Over 450 eligible proposals were received and 26 in BC were supported through the **Indigenous Community Support Fund** for \$15 million in funding nationally. The



assessment considered proposed activities, groups, budget, impact and local or regional factors.

The successful programs support a variety of Indigenous measures that help youth, homeless individuals and elders by providing food baskets, childcare, mental health supports in urban settings principally.

The Government of Canada is proud to be supporting friendship centres and other organizations as they

continue their important work for vulnerable urban Indigenous communities in the face of this pandemic.

Be assured Indigenous Services is working quickly to get the funds out the door for the 94 change to BC number accepted submissions. We have streamlined the process so the funds can flow directly to Indigenous communities and groups across the country in short order. We appreciate that the needs exceeded the available funding and that more is required to support indigenous individuals in urban centers.

PARTNER INFORMATION

Province secures safe shelter, supports for people living in major encampments

Our partners with the province of British Columbia are also taking steps to support vulnerable populations. **BC is working with the cities of Vancouver and Victoria to transition people living in encampments** in Oppenheimer Park, Topaz Park and on Pandora Avenue into safe, temporary accommodations with wraparound supports to protect their health and safety in the overlapping COVID-19 and overdose crises. The move has been applauded by both the First Nations Summit and BC AFN.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans Takes Steps to Boost Food Security

Canada's fish and seafood sector is essential to our collective food security and our economy. On Saturday, April 25, the DFO announced \$62.5 million of new assistance to the fish and seafood processing sector. This new **Canadian Seafood Stabilization Fund** will help ensure the resilience of the food system by allowing Canada's fish and seafood processing sector to safely and efficiently process, store, package, and distribute healthy, high-quality products onto the plates of Canadians.

BC Hydro Payment Deferral Option

Did you know BC Hydro has a COVID relief fund as well as a customer crisis fund? The COVID-19 Relief Fund provides bill credits which do not have to be paid back for:

- Residential customers that have lost their income as a result of COVID-19. Eligible customers will be able to apply for a bill credit of three times their average monthly bill.
- Small business customers that are currently closed as a result of COVID-19 measures. Eligible customers can apply to have their electricity use charges waived for up to three months.

Residential customers and small business customers can apply until June 30, 2020. To apply, visit [bchydro.com/covid19relief](https://www.bchydro.com/covid19relief) for application forms and further program details including eligibility requirements.

SHARE HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING YOUR DAY-TO-DAY LIFE



Statistics Canada is collecting data on an ongoing basis to better understand the impacts of COVID-19. Your response will provide insight into the challenges we all face as the COVID-19 situation evolves in Canada. This week's survey is: **Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians – Your mental health.**

The survey takes only a few minutes to complete. Your participation is important!

Last month, BC Hydro also announced its COVID-19 Customer Assistance Program. Residential and commercial customers that do not meet the eligibility requirements for the COVID-19 Relief Fund may be eligible for this program, which allows you to defer bill payments or arrange for flexible payment plans with no penalty. They also offer grants through our Customer Crisis Fund for residential customers facing temporary financial hardship and are unable to pay their bills due to job loss, illness, or loss of a family member. More information on the Customer Crisis Fund is available at bchydro.com/ccf or call their customer service team at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376) to discuss which options are available to you.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

“Our elders, in particular in our First Nations communities, are culture and history keepers. When they become ill and when they die, we all lose.”

— Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer for British Columbia

Today we want to recognize some of those working to help ease the fight against COVID-19. Matriarchal Elders Doctor Gloria Cranmer Webster and Pauline Alfred put together videos in Kwak’wala to provide support and guidance about COVID-19 to their community:

- [Elder Doctor Gloria Cranmer Webster’s video](#)
- [Elder Pauline Alfred’s video](#)

UPCOMING WEBINARS

Accessing supports for BC First Nations during COVID-19 (with Canada Revenue Agency and Heiltsuk Nation representatives)

Please join the First Nations Public Service Secretariat in welcoming representatives from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the Heiltsuk Nation who will be speaking about how to access COVID-19 supports for First Nations individuals on and off reserve. Many of you have raised questions about how individuals can access benefits and this webinar will provide many of the answers of more frequently asked questions. Karen Martin and Saverio Desantis of the CRA will be joined by Mary Leslie, of the Heiltsuk Nation. This 45-minute session will include a short presentation from each of the speakers on accessing supports for on- and off-reserve BC First Nations during COVID-19 and ideas for moving forward. Presentations will be followed by a moderated discussion.

Registration: This event **requires pre-registration**. Once you have registered, you will receive a confirmation email with a link to join the webinar.

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

ISC BC Region Town Hall #3 with FNSA and FNEC

Please join FNPSS in welcoming Catherine Lappe, Regional Director General of ISC BC Region, who will be joined by Tyrone McNeil, President of the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEC), Edith Loring-Kuhanga, President of the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA), accompanied by representatives of the BC Ministry of Education, to speak about First Nations’ education in BC given the current COVID-19 pandemic. This webinar will be approximately 60 minutes and allow for moderated Q&As from participants.

Registration: This event **requires pre-registration**. Once you have registered, you will receive a confirmation e-mail with a link to join the webinar.

Friday, May 1, 2020

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

QUESTION OF THE DAY

How can I find out which communities have COVID-19 cases?

FNHA is the health authority responsible for Indigenous communities in British Columbia. They have developed a privacy policy for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, and you can access a copy of it [here](#).

I have concerns about the mental health of my community members. Who can help them?

Community members can call the First Nations Health Authority's 24/7 culturally safe KUU-US Crisis Response Services at 1-800-588-8717 (or 250-723-2040 for child and youth / 250-723-4050 for adult and Elder). Another option is the Hope for Wellness Help Line (1-855-242-3310). Online chat is available at [hopeforwellness.ca](https://www.hopeforwellness.ca). For any other COVID-19 health-related questions, or for further information, the First Nations Health Authority would like you to use the following:

- For general inquiries – COVID19@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, call 811 or your primary care provider.

REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests: aadnc.isbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

NATIONAL INFORMATION

- **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](#).
- For a great description of what flattening the curve means, consider watching [Prime Minister Trudeau's video tweet](#)
- **Public Health Agency of Canada**
- **Resources for Canadian Businesses**
- **Transport Canada – COVID-19 measures, updates, and guidance issued by Transport Canada**

USEFUL LINKS

- Economic measures to help stabilize the economy during this challenging period. As information is rapidly changing we strongly encourage you to 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](#).

