



Sioux Lookout
First Nations
Health Authority

CORONAVIRUS COVID-19

Services Update – COVID-19

April 20, 2020

To keep our First Nation community leadership informed regarding any changes to the services we provide, Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA) aims to provide weekly updates. See below for this week's update:

Primary Care Team Department

The Sioux Lookout Area Primary Care Team (SLAPCT) is continuing to provide limited health services. Many of the services are being supported through Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN), Personal Computer Video Conferencing (PCVC) and telephone consultation. This includes services from our speech language pathologists, kinesiologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, dieticians, social workers, mental health specialists and case managers, who are all actively engaged with clients and still taking on new referrals being sent to our team.

Our nurse practitioners continue to support clients in both the Primary Care Team building at 55 Queen Street and the Northern Appointment Clinic. This support is provided either via limited face-to-face services or via telephone consultation.

We have revised our Psychiatry services to now be done either via OTN, PCVC or via telephone consultation, thus supporting physical distancing and supporting clients with self-isolation.

Developmental Services

Developmental services currently have most staff working remotely from home. They are reaching out to families to cancel face-to-face sessions and providing services via phone and internet.

We are offering pediatric complex care coordination, speech language pathology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy - transitional age youth worker and adult developmental services via phone, OTN, PCVC and Zoom. Many families were already involved in this service model and it is continuing. There is some difficulty regarding bandwidth.

Our audiology, Northwestern Ontario Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder diagnostic clinic and autism diagnostic hub are on hold at this moment. We are still accepting referrals and contacting families, but assessments are not currently occurring. The staff are working on program projects, which include providing educational material for families and communities.

Client Services Department - JMK1 and JMK2 (hostels)

- The Client Services Department is operating as usual; however, no visitors will be allowed access to the hostels. SLFNHA will be following social distancing guidelines in the hostels, transportation (with a dedicated van for self isolation cases) and food services.
- A COVID-19 Screening Process upon arrival to the hostels has been implemented.
- Hand-washing stations are implemented with increased signage for handwashing, sneezing/coughing and precautions to follow.
- Gloves and masks are available in all guestrooms.
- The domestic kitchen is closed with restricted access for infection control. A breakfast menu is being implemented and other food services are delivered to guest rooms.
- Clients are to report any sudden illnesses related to COVID-19.

JMK1

- Implemented one wing for self isolation and one wing for quarantine (COVID-19 clients).
- Corridors, connecting link to hospital are closed
- On the lower level, we have placed prenatal, dialysis and other clients who need to stay close to the hospital.

Physician Services

Physicians services are continuing within the region. Within the Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre (SLMHC), physicians continue with essential services in the ER, inpatient care, obstetrics and Day Medicine. All non-essential outpatient appointments located at SLMHC have been discontinued. COVID-19 pathways have been developed and implemented in the flow of work.

Physicians continue to support all northern communities, through phone and telehealth support. In community services from physicians, continue in consultation with community leadership, nursing, the physician and the SLFNHA Medical Director. Support staff continue to be the link between physicians, nursing stations, allied services and patients. This is being done both on and off location. Screening processes for physicians, nurses, staff and essential patient encounters are in place at all locations.

Northern Clinic

The Northern Clinic is operating as usual, with the following restrictions:

- Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.)
- Escorts are asked to wait outside of the clinic (Social Distancing guidelines)
- Clients will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 (not to be alarmed all clinics have implemented the screening process to stop the spread of COVID-19)

Clients requiring an appointment/contact with their family physician are asked to call the Northern Clinic, where they will be assessed. They would then be provided with a phone consult appointment, telehealth appointment or potentially on-site appointment with their physician or nurse practitioner.

Approaches to Community Wellbeing (Public Health)

COVID-19 Regional Response

Approaches to Community Wellbeing (ACW)'s Public Health Physician, Dr. Natalie Bocking, is coordinating SLFNHA's COVID-19 Regional Response (CRRT). The Director of Approaches to Community Wellbeing is on that team, coordinating public health operations. Within public health operations we are supporting health promotion, public health tools and checklists to support program delivery and response at the community-level and supporting capacity around case and contact management of COVID-19.

This week, we have been working on health promotion resources around parenting, mental wellbeing, and smoking. We hosted two Facebook Live events for youth on coping strategies and a guided grounded exercise. We also worked with Elder Emily Greig on a video. We are also working on collecting videos on how people are staying healthy and coping during this time of COVID-19 social/physical distancing.

In addition to health promotion resources, we are also developing tools, checklists, and guidance documents to provide advice on how to respond to COVID-19 Tools/Checklists. This week, we revised infection prevention and control standards guidelines for assessment centres, quarantine centres, and isolation centres and hope to have them finalized next week. We are also working to finalize a tool on who should use PPE and a frequently asked questions document about COVID-19 testing.

Ongoing preparation is being done for if Indigenous Services Canada approves SLFNHA's request to take on case and contact management of COVID-19. We visited a community again this week and participated in daily phone calls with the community leaders to support contact tracing. During the community visit, members of ACW's team also supported emergency management team organization, community wellbeing assessment plans, discussions on personal protective equipment, and selecting alternate COVID care sites.

Ongoing ACW Services

Harm Reduction

While responding to COVID-19, ACW is maintaining our essential services. This includes our ongoing harm reduction supply distribution (i.e. safe injection kits and naloxone). We are also still providing health promotion resources and have developed some resources specific to COVID-19. We are also supporting program direction and training, although are looking at virtual means to do this. This has included training directly observed therapy workers for suboxone programs.

Roots for Community Wellbeing

We also continue to maintain the immunization repository by entering immunization data and answering calls for information about immunization status.

Preventing Infectious Diseases

We also continue to provide case and contact management support for tuberculosis.

Raising our Children

We continue to engage with youth workers and youth through email and the Anishinabe Youth Network. In addition, this week we have been gathering information about what women should expect when leaving their community for prenatal appointments or deliveries.

Nodin Child and Family Intervention Services

Nodin Child and Family Intervention Services still operates during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing mental health services either by phone/Ontario Telemedicine Network or in-person counselling at our main office. Most of our staff are tele-working effective March 23, 2020 while a selected amount remains at the worksite. Below details each of Nodin's services and how they are supporting clients and communities currently. There are some minor changes since the last update.

Main Reception:

Nodin's main reception continues to operate, connecting callers to services and staff. The number for reception is 807-737-4011 and toll-free number is 1-800-446-7863.

Intake Service:

Intake continues to operate. The team is teleworking and no longer in the main office. If you have questions about referrals, services, waitlists, etc., please contact Linda Chikane-Chapman, Intake Manager, directly at 807-738-6014 (cell) or call her office phone at 807-737-6142, leave a message, and she will periodically check her messages and get back to you.

Outpatient Mental Health Service:

Nodin runs a Sioux Lookout based Outpatient Mental Health Service (OMHS). This is only a short-term, week-long service for those demonstrating high-risk behaviours causing harm or risk of harm to self/others. Individuals receive intensive counselling, crisis intervention, psychoeducation, safety and discharge planning. The normal practice has been, after receiving referrals, to arrange for individuals to travel from communities to Sioux Lookout to attend OMHS and/or to see individuals of a more critical nature from SLMHC following a Medi-Vac and ER assessment. This is temporarily changing due to the pandemic.

Due to the pandemic:

1. OMHS is no longer arranging for individuals to travel from communities to Sioux Lookout to attend the service.
2. OMHS staff are instead connecting with individuals on the pending list to offer intermediate short-term phone/OTN support until we can resume normal practice.
3. Psychologists and Expressive Arts Therapists are connecting to clients by phone/OTN.
 - a) OMHS are continuing to accept referrals from Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre following a Med-Vac and ER assessment.
 - b) In the interim OMHS are also accepting referrals from the Sioux Lookout Northern Clinic if an individual has mental health needs that must be addressed and cannot be put on a waitlist.

- c) Individuals accepted into OMHS from the hospital/northern clinic are seen for counselling at our main office in Sioux Lookout.

If you have any questions regarding new referrals to OMHS please contact our Intake Manager as per above instruction. If calling about a client you are aware is already attending OMHS, you can call Christine Morellato, Clinical Manager of OMHS, at 807-737-6141.

Crisis Response Program:

This program provides crisis intervention and support to immediate families impacted by tragic incidents occurring within their family unit (e.g. suicide, homicide, tragic accidents etc.) and other community members as requested. Usual practice has been to send volunteer crisis teams and crisis workers to communities upon community request.

This practice has changed until further notice. No volunteer crisis teams will be sent to communities and contractual counsellors or cultural workers will only be considered if requests come directly from Chief and Council. We can also arrange for telephone counselling upon request.

Our Crisis Response Program Supervisor and Coordinator can provide community Crisis Coordinators telephone support if requested, will continue to connect with partners (i.e. Tribal Councils) to offer additional support if requested, and will help with regional response team planning. If you have questions or would like assistance please call Vicki Hartnett, Crisis Response Program Supervisor, at 807-738-0653 (cell).

Travelling Mental Health Counsellors:

Usual practice has been for Mental Health Counsellors to travel into assigned communities to provide counselling. Until further notice, due to the pandemic, we are not sending travelling counsellors to communities. Instead, these counsellors are tele-working, and connecting with their clients to provide telephone/OTN counselling. If a file is not open with us, a referral must be forwarded to intake.

Youth School Counsellors:

Nodin has four Youth School Counsellors, two who provide counselling on site at Sioux North High School and two who provide counselling on site at Pelican Falls First Nations High School. Due to both schools being closed, these counsellors are tele-working, and connecting with their clients to provide telephone/OTN counselling. If a file is not open with us, a referral must be forwarded to intake.

Children's Mental Health and Addictions Workers

Nodin has community-based Children's Mental Health and Addiction Workers in only some of the communities. They are teleworking, providing mental health counselling to their clients by phone. They are also helping their communities in areas of need if requested. If a file is not open with us, a referral has to be forwarded to intake.

ON-CALL SERVICE

Nodin CFI On-Call Workers provide phone monitoring outside regular office hours for a period of seven days: Monday to Friday from 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. and 24 hours on weekends and statutory holidays. On-Call does not provide one-on-one counselling in-office. This service is only available to clients currently attending the OMHS and community members who have been internally identified as needing this support.

On-Call Workers respond to new referrals, including those of high-acuity, received outside regular office hours or on weekends and statutory holidays. However, it is important for referral sources to know that it is extremely challenging for on-call to locate individuals and often contact does not happen.

For this reason, if the referring agent assesses the client to be high-risk, it is recommended that additional safety planning measures be put into place until confirmation of an appointment with a counsellor at Nodin is received. Other responsibilities include responding to community crisis. Soon, during this pandemic, On-Call will also be available for all clients at the hostel who are in self isolation due to Covid-19 symptoms, and a resource for hostel staff, who may require mental health support during the pandemic period.

For More Information call:

Monday- Friday 8:30 a.m. -4:30 p.m. Only

Linda Chikane-Chapman
Intake Manager
Cell: 807-738-6014

After Hours/ Weekends and Holidays:

On-Call Worker
Cell: 807-737-9257

Traditional Healing:

Our Traditional Coordinator, Tom Chisel, is tele-working. He will not be travelling to communities during this pandemic, nor will the contractual traditional healers under his supervision. Requests for traditional healing should still be forwarded to the Traditional Healing Coordinator, to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Tom may have ideas as to how to still support communities during this pandemic. Tom can be reached at 807-738-2556, or emailed at Tom.Chisel@slfnha.com

Stay tuned for more updates. Visit our Community Regional Response Team (CRRT) Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SLFNHA.CRRT>