MAY 14, 2020

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) COVID-19 Update

Yesterday Chief Celia Echum was laid to rest in Geraldton. Once again, the NAN Executive Council expresses their deepest condolences to family and friends of Chief Celia Echum, the community of Ginoogaming First Nation and Matawa First Nations as we all mourn her passing. She was a fierce leader and advocate, and her friendship will be greatly missed.

Thunder Bay District Health Unit	• Confirmed Positive (May 14): 79 • Active Cases: 4 • Resolved Cases: 74 • Deceased: 1
Porcupine Health Unit	• Number of Cases (May 14): 65 • Currently Under Investigation: 274 • Resolved Cases: 52 • Deceased: 5
Northwestern Health Unit	• Positive Tests (May 14): 16 • Pending Tests: 1115 • Resolved: 16

- As we head into the May long weekend, the NAN Executive Council encourages you to take time to rest. Since Monday is a holiday – our next call will be **Thursday, May 21, 2020 | 1p.m. EST | 12p.m. CST.**
- The NAN Executive Council is committed to continuing to support our communities, including videos of support to all of our graduates – we are very proud of our students and the pandemic should not prevent us from sending encouragement and well wishes.
- We want to also say thank you to our crisis team for all the work they are doing to provide assistance to communities. We are grateful for everything they have done and continue to do as support during this pandemic.

NAN Trilateral Table

- The 5th Trilateral Table call took place on Tuesday May 12.
- Items discussed on this week's call included:
  - Funding around Pandemic Pay and the definition of "essential worker" – we will be following up on this and hope for a more comprehensive update next week.

- Mental Health Needs – further meetings are taking place with respect to the tele-mental health proposals with the province and federal government and conversations are moving along very well.
- Broadband – we expect an update from ISC, and we are continuing to support our tribal councils and partner organizations to ensure that broadband needs are met across the territory
- Education – this topic was introduced for the first time at this week's table and we look forward to further discussions on the following topics to start:
  - Reprofiling Funds and commitment to reimbursement.
  - Planning for September; and
  - The viability of off-Reserve First Nations schools
- Working Group for Enhanced Prevention Planning (Easing Restrictions)
  - High Level Review of NAN Task Team Framework & ISC's guidelines

- We remain committed to this table; we are hearing that it is very helpful and has also strengthened relationships with our health authorities.
- NAN will continue to advocate for issues important to our communities, Tribal Councils and health authorities, so please let us know of any issues that your communities may have via emergency@nan.ca.

Critical Infrastructure

- NAN understands as a result of conversations on the last NAN Chiefs call that ISC Minister Miller's regional office has been in contact with Chief Moonias and the project team and will be following up as required.
- We have also passed along the Webequie funding proposals and understand that a meeting is being set up with Chief and Council to review the applications and funding that was provided.

NAN COVID-19 Task Team

- It is recommended that NAN First Nations communities continue to keep public health measures in place and to restrict non-essential travel in and out of the communities to protect community members from coming in contact with COVID-19.
- If communities are approached by manufacturers and distributors of PPE, PPE products, "treatments" and testing products – we encourage them to reach out to emergency@nan.ca to ensure they have been vetted through national and provincial validation processes to confirm they are legitimate and not scams.
- Inflammatory syndrome in children similar to Kawasaki Syndrome– there is still not a great deal of concreate evidence that it is related to COVID-19. The province has updated their case information of COVID-19 to include this inflammatory syndrome in children.
- **Mental Health & Substance Use Working Group** – had a meeting yesterday afternoon to discuss the provincial restrictions around funerals. The document will be updated once the provincial restrictions change.
- the working group discussed preparing for a surge of mental health cases around depression, anxiety, PTSD by this fall - service organizations will need to be prepared.

- There is a mental health counsellor providing services in the language to a case load of approximately 30 Elders. If there are any other communities that would like this to be put into place, please let us know through the emergency@nan.ca.

Ontario's Plan to Reopen/ Ease Restrictions

- Health and Safety continues to be paramount as the guide to reopening and easing restrictions.
- The NAN COVID-19 Task Team is in the process of finalizing a guide that will be shared with the leadership early next week.
    - This will be a guide for communities to use when they begin to consider re-opening and easing restrictions.
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and Ontario have both started to share their guidance for re-opening because of this, there is a slight delay in getting Chiefs the NAN draft document. We want to make sure that it is comprehensive and relevant to our communities.
- NAN encourages Chiefs and Councils to begin to have these important discussions at the community level.
- We are hopeful that all decisions for individual communities will be supported by the Provincial and Federal Governments, including funding necessary to implement increased health and safety measures as re-opening begins slowly.
- At NAN, we are working to ensure that business can continue in a healthy and safe way and will provide updates as to how we will move forward (meetings etc.). NAN will be getting a legal opinion on this and will update leadership as soon as we can.

NAN Education

- NAN is still developing and revising the plan for education that was distributed in the Memo to Chiefs last week.
- An increase in broadband and bandwidth capacity is essential in making this plan successful.
- NAN will continue to reach out to First Nations Education Boards, Tribal Councils, and Independent First Nations to discuss this plan moving forward.

NAN Legal Services

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the protocol for discharge planning for releases from corrections has been finalized and signed by NAN, Ministry of Attorney General and Solicitor General.
    - It is being signed by NAN Legal Services later today. Once signed, the agreement will be in place and continue to be implemented.
- NAN Legal has been able to assist 40 NAN members to return home during COVID-19 and will continue within the formalized process.
- If any communities are concerned about members, please reach out to NAN legal services.

Nishnawbe Aski Police Services (NAPS)

- Enforcement continues to be an issue for our communities.
- Border closures and other public health measures that communities have implemented via Band Council Resolution (BCR). This method was recommended in order to respect the

inherent right of self government and the inherent right to implement measures to protect the health and safety of communities.

- This has been raised extensively via written correspondence and on calls with the province and ISC. It was again raised on a call with the Ministry of Attorney General this morning.
- We are working on ensuring that a commitment is made in writing to support this approach.
- The NAPS Board has recommended that the BCRs stay in place and NAPS continues to enforce federal and provincial laws and we will be following up on the prosecution piece as an urgent matter.

Communications

- Members of the NAN Executive Council will continue to appear on Wawatay Radio on Tuesday at 12 pm EST and on Friday at 1:05 pm EST.
- COVID-19 Tools and Resources are being translated into Oji-Cree, Ojibway, and Cree to assist the communities in spreading awareness and public health messaging on COVID-19. They are posted on the NAN website under COVID-19 Tools and Resources.

Urban Communities

- NAN has posted specific information on the NAN website for members living off-reserve in urban centres across northwestern and northeastern Ontario.
    - This includes how to find shelters, food banks, social and mental health services, as well as Indigenous organizations that can assist.
- Please continue to access our website as we are updating it daily with the most up to date information: **www.nancovid19.ca**

NEXT CALL: Thursday, May 21, 2020 | 1p.m. EST | 12p.m. CST