



July 2, 2020

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) COVID-19 Update

Thunder Bay District Health Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Tests (July 2): 91 • Resolved Cases: 88 • Active Cases: 2 • Deceased: 1
Porcupine Health Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Cases (July 2): 67 • Resolved Cases: 66 • Active Cases: 1 • Deceased: 8
Northwestern Health Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Tests (July 2): 36 • Resolved: 29 • Active Cases: 7

- The NAN Executive Council sends condolences and prayers to the community of North Caribou Lake First Nation as the two community members lost to suicide are laid to rest this week.
- We need to ensure that messaging and recommendations around public health measures and physical distancing are still being followed in our communities. Each community must be as vigilant as ever and we still cannot afford to relax the measures that are in place. These include:
 - Proper use of masks and other face coverings: if worn, these should cover both your mouth and nose.
 - Frequent hand washing and/or sanitizing.
 - Continue to practice physical distancing from people outside of your household.
 - These measures should continue to be followed, as practicable, when you are on the land.
 - Members returning to the community for any reason should self-isolate for 14 days.
- If someone in a NAN First Nation community suspects they have symptoms of COVID-19, it is very important that they not to go to the nursing station without getting instructions first from the nurse over the phone.
- Everyone must act like they have COVID-19 – this is not an extraordinary measure, but a measure that every person is being asked to practice.
- **PLEASE ALSO SEND ANY NEW COMMUNITY GUIDELINES/ RESTRICTIONS THAT YOUR COMMUNITY HAS IN PLACE TO emergency@nan.ca SO WE CAN UNDERSTAND AND SHARE.**



Positive Cases in NAN Territory

- We are seeing a bit of an influx in cases, especially in the western part of NAN, and many seem to be tied to travel to Sioux Lookout.
- People who must travel out need to be reminded of the risks and given the tools to stay safe from the virus.
- If you need to access PPE for members who must travel, and are not sure how to do so, please email us at emergency@nan.ca.
- We are also seeing some breakdowns in communication between the health sector and our First Nation leadership.
- Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler sent a letter to the Meno Ya Win last week seeking clarification on their communication process and requested to be included in it.
 - Our leadership simply want assurance that they will know if something is happening with a positive case.
 - When information isn't properly shared with leadership, a lot of confusion, chaos, and anger result.
 - We are hopeful that all health partners can work in unison with our Leadership to ensure communication is timely and accurate and we will be looking into ways to ensure this happens.
- **Sachigo Lake First Nation:**
 - A member has tested positive upon routine surveillance testing at Meno Ya Win hospital.
 - The individual was returning home, but the plane was re-routed back to Sioux Lookout.
 - The individual is self-isolating in Sioux Lookout.
 - Contact tracing will start immediately.
- **Eabametoong First Nation:**
 - All cases are self-isolating.
 - There is no evidence of further spread and no positive test results so far.
 - Some test results are still pending.
- **Mishkeegogamang First Nation:**
 - All cases are self-isolating.
 - There is no evidence of further spread and no positive test results so far.
 - Some test results are still pending.
- Information is often informally released through social media before it is formally announced by health authorities and units. It is important to always verify or fact check any information you hear before reacting.

Preparing for Evacuations

- Urban sites for evacuations have been confirmed: Kapuskasing, Cochrane, Timmins, and the Nav Centre in Cornwall.
- The Province is still working to finalize Sudbury. They have not shared their operational plans with NAN, and therefore we can not recommend this site at this time.
- Quetico is still in the process of becoming a host, however the Province has not provided them with a contract to date. If an evacuation were to happen, this site would still be available for use and the contract will fall into place after the emergency.
- Other non-urban sites have been recommended to the Province by NAN and partners; however, the Province has not secured these sites.
- Evacuation operations are still unknown. NAN has been asking the Province to provide operation plans given COVID-19 and we have not received these. At this time, the clearest



response we have is that the host sites are operating based on local public health measures. This means masks are not required, the public can go shopping etc.

- If an evacuation occurs today, communities will need to be able to provide the Province and Host communities with their internal policies on how to operate the host site. There needs to be clear direction if community members are to stay on-site or if they are free to visit off-site locations such as shopping centres, restaurant, etc. The Province and host communities will also need to know if the evacuated community members will be required to wear masks at all time.
- Chiefs and Council are encouraged to have discussions about what rules and regulations they would like to have in place should they need to evacuate, and they are sent to urban settings.
- It is recommended that this be discussed and written into the declaration of the emergency by Chief and Council.
- We are also encouraging communities to complete their evacuations plans. NAN has provided templates previously, and they can also be found on www.nancovid19.ca.
- If there are any further questions or concerns, contact us through emergency@nan.ca.
- NAN will continue to advocate for non-urban host sites and seek additional information from the Province on evacuation operations during COVID-19.

NAN COVID-19 Task Team

- Mae Katt has graciously agreed to be the new Task Team Lead now that Dr. Bocking is on parental leave.
- NAN would like to introduce Dr. Anna Banerji as the new public health lead for the NAN COVID-19 Task Team.
- The Task Team continues to meet twice a week to discuss issues related to COVID-19 and NAN territory.
- Recently discussed issues around information sharing and confidentiality; the Task Team acknowledges that these issues are very complex and suggests that leadership discuss relevant legislation, processes, and procedures with all community members and any health care providers in the community, to determine how the community wishes to move forward.
- The Task Team restates the importance of community preparation for any cases of COVID-19 within their community members; it is recommended that communities refer to the NAN Critical Preparedness Readiness and Response Actions for COVID-19 Transmission Scenarios and the Framework for Reopening (attached to bulletin) while pandemic planning.
- The Task Team will continue to review and revise these documents as needed.

Mental Health:

- The Task Team continues to discuss mental health concerns and the impact of the pandemic on youth and other community members.
- NAN submitted the final proposal for the provision of remote mental health services to the Trilateral Table on June 30th.
- The proposal was well received by ISC and we are hopeful to receive formal approval soon.

Broadband:

- The broadband proposal that the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO) developed with the assistance of Knet, Western James Bay Telecom Network and NAN in response to the increased reliance on internet connectivity during the COVID-19 was **approved**.
- The proposed work will increase broadband and improve network performance in 16 remote NAN communities.



