February 11, 2021

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) COVID-19 Update

Thunder Bay District Health Unit	Total Number: 1104 • **Active:** 106 (most recent cases: 21 reported February 11) • Recovered: 971 • Deaths: 27 • Hospitalized: 3 (1 in ICU)
Porcupine Health Unit	Total Number: 301 • **Active:** 32 (most recent cases: 2 reported in the area of Hearst/Hornepayne on February 11) • Recovered: 246 • Deaths: 23
Northwestern Health Unit	Total Number: 290 • **Active:** 14 (most recent cases: 3 announced in the Kenora region on February 11) • Recovered: 275 • Deaths: 1
Public Health Sudbury & Districts	Total Number: 546 cases • **Active:** 27 (most recent cases: 5 new cases noted on February 10) • Recovered: 509 • Deaths: 10
Timiskaming Health Unit	Total Number: 92 • **Active:** 1 (most recent cases: 1 announced February 9 in the central part of the district). • Recovered: 90 • Deaths: 1

NAN Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler – Update

Phase 1 Vaccine Roll-Out

- This is week #3 of the Phase 1 Vaccine Roll-Out in the remote NAN First Nations.
- We thank everyone involved in this team effort for making it such a success, including NAN Leadership, SLFNHA, WAHA, Ornge, and the Province, led by IAO Deputy Minister Batise.
- We acknowledge Phase 1 Roll-Out Chiefs who continue to lead by example by getting

vaccinated and demonstrating to members that this is how we will end the pandemic.

- We look forward to more communities receiving the vaccine in the upcoming weeks.
- Work is ongoing to get the vaccine to road access communities, and we remain mindful of our urban population and the importance of ensuring they get access to the vaccine as quickly as possible.

Funding

- NAN Chiefs are encouraged to contact ISC/FNIHB about unmet COVID-19 funding needs required to sustain community-led responses to the pandemic. Funding from ISC is still available to access resources for surge capacity, such as PPE, isolation units, and costs to maintain security check points.

Broadband

- NAN is looking into an opportunity that may support some NAN First Nations in improving internet access for students. NAN will be working with the Chiefs Committee on Education and Infrastructure to review this information and will provide more details to Leadership as soon as possible.

Winter Roads

- The NAN Task Team has developed a new recommendation to address the steps that transportation companies and communities should take to prepare for restricted access on winter roads. This document will be circulated to Leadership as soon as possible.

COVID-19 Outbreak Among Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

- The Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) has declared an outbreak of COVID-19 among individuals experiencing homelessness in Thunder Bay.
- NAN recognizes that this is a crisis and treating it as an emergency. On the next Regular NAN Chiefs Call, the NAN Executive will provide an update on our work to support vulnerable populations who are not only facing this extremely cold weather, but also struggling to safely access shelter/warming centres during the pandemic.
- Matawa has recently launched *Wiichiihehwaywin*, a very important outreach program for Matawa members in crisis in Thunder Bay, which provides support in connecting to services.

NAN COVID-19 Task Team – Mae Katt

- Ontario is extending the stay-at-home order across most of the province until February 16.
- The province will gradually be reopening businesses under more strict public health measures, with businesses only being able to operate at 25% capacity.
- Ontario has pushed back March Break for publicly funded schools to April 12, and has asked that private schools also defer March Break.
- Outbreaks continue at the Jail and the Correctional Centre.
  - On February 11, 9 of the 21 new cases announced in the region were at the Jail.
  - The Task Team is working with NAN Legal to provide input on considerations for discharge planning during COVID-19.

Active Cases in NAN

- Constance Lake First Nation: 4 active cases.
- Ginoogaming First Nation: 1 active case.
- No active cases in SLFNHA communities.
- No active cases in WAHA communities.

Manitoba Update

- New daily cases and positive test rates are decreasing.
- Manitoba will start easing restrictions on February 12.
- As of February 10, there are 1,133 active cases among First Nations people.
- The military is assisting with a COVID-19 outbreak in Pauingassi First Nation.

Task Team Update

- NAN Legal joined the February 2 Task Team meeting to discuss their work to support inmate discharges in Thunder Bay and some of the difficulties encountered.
- NAN Task Team is supporting the Vaccine Roll-Out and available to provide advice, as-requested, on vaccine educational materials.
- About two months ago, the Task Team Chair formed a working group with representatives from communities that operate rapid testing instruments to develop community testing/screening guidelines.
- The guidance document on rapid testing instruments, *"NAN First Nations Interim Guidance on COVID-19 Screening"* was developed through discussions of this working group, and with input from the National Microbiology Laboratory.
- This guidance provides an alternative model to the Province's approach.
- The document will be released to Health Authorities and Health Directors on February 12.

NAN Hope

- If you know someone who is struggling, please tell them about NAN Hope.
- As of last week, NAN Hope has connected **275 clients to care**.
- NAN Hope offers:
    - 24/7 toll-free rapid access to confidential crisis services.
    - Rapid access to clinical and mental health counselling.
    - Navigators who provide connection to existing mental health and addictions support services in home communities and the region.
- NAN Hope is **not** just a crisis line; the navigation and referral to ongoing care is an important part of the service and helping those who use the service to move forward with their healing journey.
- Traditional Knowledge Keepers and Healers are now part of NAN HOPE's roster of counsellors; clients can also be connected to counsellors who speak the 3 language dialects across NAN.
- NAN HOPE is now involved with discharge planning from the Adolescent Unit at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre.
- NAN Hope can be accessed through 1-844-NAN-HOPE (1-844-626-4673) and www.nanhope.ca.
- If you would like marketing material about NAN Hope for your community or organization, you can request them at https://nanhope.ca/index.php/marketing-materials-request-form/.

NAPS Update – Chief Roland Morrison

- Thank you to NAN Chiefs who have allowed officers to be vaccinated in community clinics.
- For the past few weeks, NAPS and representatives from the civilian bargaining unit have been negotiating on a new collective agreement.
- On February 5, NAPS management and the civilians bargaining team agreed to terms on a new collective agreement for civilian employees. This agreement is subject to ratification. If ratified, this agreement will be in place for the next three years.
- NAN and NAPS Police Service Board continue to negotiate for a new funding agreement for

NAPS.

- As requested, a meeting was hosted on February 3 by the NAPS Police Board with NAN Chiefs to discuss priorities and the status of funding negotiations.
- The next round of negotiations is scheduled for February 12.

NAN Legal Update – ED Irene Linklater, DGC Derek Fox

- Through a Section 22 Order, a medical officer of health can require individuals to take or refrain from taking any action in respect of a communicable disease.
- There is now a Section 22 Order under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* with respect to the release of inmates, for the protection of inmates and communities.
- Among other details, this Order recommends that released inmates take a taxi to stay at the isolation centre on Cumberland Street.
- The NAN Legal Services team continues to work with inmates who are released.
- NAN Legal Services respects Chief and Council requests and is working with pandemic teams in communities to ensure safety measures are in place and to assist with isolation in hotels in Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay and Timmins.
- SOLGEN Deputy Minister Deborah Richardson will be joining the **February 25 NAN Chiefs Call**.

DGC Walter Naveau - Update

- NAN Chiefs are invited to register for the **Virtual Child Welfare Forum** on **February 17** from **1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. EST | 12:00p.m. – 3:00p.m. CST**.
- This is a NAN-specific virtual forum through Microsoft Teams that will cover topics including First Nation Child Welfare Jurisdiction (C-92): *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth, and Families,* Band Representative Services, and Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services - Child Welfare Redesign.
- A poster, memo and registration form were sent to NAN Chiefs on February 4.
- For more information, please contact Aurora Smith at asmith@nan.ca or Nichole Kinzel at (807) 632-5881. Leadership are encouraged to share this information with councillors, health directors, band representatives, child welfare staff, Ontario Works Administrators, Elders, Women's Council and Youth Council members.

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 provide assistance.
- Please visit **www.nancovid19.ca.** It is updated daily with the most current information.

Closing

NEXT VACCINE ROLL OUT CALL FOR PHASE 1 COMMUNITIES: Thursday, February 18, 2021 | 1p.m. EST | 12p.m. CST

NEXT REGULAR NAN CHIEFS CALL: Thursday, February 25, 2021 | 1p.m. EST | 12p.m. CST