

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: November 13, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

Please email questions about COVID-19 to: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

Alberta, including many First Nation communities, continues to see a troubling increase in the number of cases of COVID-19. The number of active cases on reserve is the highest they have been since the start of the pandemic. Many new cases are linked to social gatherings (e.g. birthday parties; non-essential travel), and community events (e.g. in-person band meetings; wakes). Today's confirmed cases are reflective of exposures that happened within the last 2 weeks, which means we have an opportunity today to impact case numbers for tomorrow. If we align with provincial public health measures right now, today, we can change this concerning trend. Key public health measures continue to be limiting social gatherings; organizing virtual meetings; staying home when unwell; limiting non-essential travel; and using a mask when social distancing is not possible. Diligently working together, applying these public health measures and heeding public health advice today, will see ourselves, our families and our communities stay safe tomorrow.

Status Update

Additional First Nations on-reserve data (Alberta) is provided at the end of this document (*Appendix A*).

Number of Cases Reported* as of Nov 13, 2020:

**numbers are changing rapidly and may change after this bulletin is released*

Alberta: There are **8,305 Active Cases** of COVID-19 in Alberta.

	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)	First Nations On Reserve in Canada (Indigenous Services Canada)	Alberta (Alberta Health)
Confirmed Cases	282,577	2253	36,405
Deaths	10,768	17	393
Recovered	226,775	1344	27,707

First Nations living on and off reserve (Alberta): There are **1,639** confirmed cases of COVID-19 to date and **16** deaths in First Nations living on and off reserve in Alberta. Confirmed cases are: **375** in Calgary Zone; **427** in Edmonton Zone; **135** in South Zone; **517** in North Zone; **182** in Central zone and **3** unknown. *Further Information:* Aggregate data on COVID-19 First Nations cases in Alberta is available at: <http://www.afnigc.ca/main/index.php?id=home> and <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>

First Nations living on reserve in Alberta:



Location (By Zone)	Confirmed Cases	Active Cases	Recovered
Calgary Zone	157	89	67
South Zone	66	15	50
Central Zone	119	29	89
Edmonton Zone	27	16	11
North Zone	343	99	242
TOTAL	712	249	458



Testing in Alberta – Update

- As of Nov 13, 2020, the total number of reported swab samples collected to date in First Nation communities in Alberta is **46,322**.
- **Testing continues to be a powerful tool to help limit the spread.** If you have symptoms, please stay home and book a testing appointment.
- Alberta has revised its targeted COVID-19 testing, pausing general asymptomatic testing, to further reduce testing wait times and speed access to results. Priority testing is now available to:
 - Any person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19
 - All close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases
 - Anyone linked to a known outbreak
- **Reminder:** Testing outside of the provincial testing criteria must be reviewed and supported by the ISC-AB MOH. Please send testing enquiries to the ISC-AB MOH by: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca
- Parents/guardians in Alberta can access COVID-19 results for their children through *MyHealth Records*. Albertans aged 14 and up can also access results. [Join today](#).

Vaccine Watch

- *[New]* Government of Canada (PHAC) has released '[What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine for Canada](#)' with information on a future COVID-19 vaccine.
- *[New]* Prime Minister Trudeau has stated that, if all goes well, a [promising COVID-19 vaccine](#) by Pfizer could be available to Canadians early 2021.
- The current status of COVID-19 treatment and vaccine trials, as authorized by Health Canada, can be viewed [here](#). A CBC [vaccine tracker](#) also identifies the current status of COVID-19 vaccines.
- ISC-AB MOH's are **actively monitoring** the national **COVID-19 vaccine trial** stages and results taking place and will provide updates as they become available.
- **Reminder:** Influenza immunizations for this flu season continue to be a priority in the midst of COVID-19. ISC-AB is working with First Nation health centers and communities to support influenza and pneumococcal **immunization programs**. Please contact your local health staff or FNIHB-AB for more information.

Alberta's Relaunch- Update

- Alberta remains in stage two of the provincial relaunch strategy.
[New] Alberta has implemented additional targeted public health measures (all existing measures and legal orders remain in place) to help protect the health system and limit the spread of COVID-19. These measures apply to all [communities on the enhanced list \(purple zones\)](#). Additional measures apply to the Calgary area and Edmonton area, and the cities of Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and Red Deer. For more information on these new measures please [click here](#).

Mandatory Measures

- From Nov 13-27, restaurants, bars, lounges/pubs are to stop liquor sales by 10pm and close by 11pm in all regions identified under the 'enhanced status'.
- 50-person limit on indoor and outdoor wedding ceremonies and funeral services
- 15-person limit on social and family gatherings - indoors and outdoors - where people are mixing and mingling

Voluntary/Strongly Recommended Measures

- Limited attendance to one-third capacity in faith-based organizations at one time
- Employers should implement measures to reduce the number of employees in office locations at any one time.
- No social gatherings inside your home or outside your community.
- Limit of 3 cohorts: your core household, your school, and one other cohort
- Wear a mask in all indoor work settings, except when alone in a workspace or an appropriate barrier is in place.

- **[New]** Alberta has revised its **contact tracing process** to support faster contact tracing and focus on those at greatest risk of illness. AHS will only be directly notifying contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases in three priority groups: Health care workers; Children; and individuals living or working within congregate or communal facilities. Albertans who have tested positive, and who are outside the 3 priority groups are **asked to identify their own close contacts of exposure and provide to AHS** by visiting www.ahs.ca/closecontacts. Using a text messaging notification system, AHS will now notify all close contacts whose phone numbers were provided by the individual. For more information please [click here](#). **Note:** ISC-AB MOH's will continue to support and encourage contact tracing notification processes for First Nations on-reserve. For more information please contact sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca.
- **[New]** The Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic (AIVCC) has opened its virtual doors, providing same day, primary care services to rural and urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit patients and families through a secure telephone and/or video system. Its [facebook page](#) is now live. To book a same day appointment, please call 1.888.342.4822. For more information please see: <https://aivcc.ca/> or email info@aivcc.ca
- **Reminder:** ISC-AB COVID-19 **guidance for funerals, wakes and memorials** to prevent the spread of infection can be [found here](#). Additional provincial guidance can be [found here](#).
- **Reminder:** ISC-AB has developed several resources to support communities during COVID-19, which are available on [OneHealth](#). ISC-AB Medical Officers of Health (MOHs) and Environmental Public Health Officers (EPHOs) continue to be available to provide public health support.

What the Government of Canada and ISC/FNIHB-AB Are Doing

-  **Reminder:** The next ISC-Alberta COVID-19 First Nations MOH **Telehealth** session will be held **Nov 19, featuring Dr. Deena Hinshaw**. Previous telehealth sessions are recorded and are available at: <https://fntn.ca/>.
- **[New]** Government of Canada, in partnership with Food Banks Canada, has launched a \$2.3 million [Rural and Northern Capacity Fund](#) to improve access to food for those living in rural and northern communities, and who are experiencing food insecurity especially in the midst of COVID-19. For more information and how to apply, please [click here](#).
- **Reminder:** ISC-Alberta's COVID-19 **First Nations Funding Telehealth mini-series** runs Tuesdays, 1-3pm, throughout Nov. For registration information, please see: <https://fntn.ca/>.
- ISC continues to provide funding to [access additional public health measures during COVID-19](#), including increased surge health staffing capacity required to support immunizations, testing etc. For more information, please contact your Community Liaison Team member or email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

Mental Health and Wellness- Update

- We acknowledge the significant impact COVID-19 has had on all those working to support communities during this time. Planning is underway for an Alberta COVID-19 **First Nations Telehealth session** dedicated to mental health and burnout in the workplace, particularly front-line workers during COVID-19. Details will be provided as it becomes available.
- **Reminder:** AHS, in partnership with Togetherall, has launched a free, anonymous, [virtual mental health network](#), offering various mental health services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [Register Here](#)
- **Reminder:** Mental Wellness remains a priority for all of us during the pandemic. Non-Insured Health Benefits- Mental Health Counselling Services are available by calling NIHB (AB) at **1-800-232-7301**.

Additional Updates

- **[New]** Blood Tribe, along with DerRic Starlight's *Nuppets*, has launched a 2nd video in their COVID-19 safety outreach series, called "[Super Bo Clean](#)".
- **[New]** The National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health has released '[Rapid Review: What factors may help protect Indigenous peoples and communities in Canada...from COVID-19](#)'

Additional information

If you have general questions about COVID-19 or require current information, please refer to the following websites which are trusted information sources and are being regularly maintained and updated. **Should you have questions about COVID-19, please do not hesitate to email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca**

OneHealth - <https://www.onehealth.ca/ab/ABCovid-19>

InfoPoint (First Nations Health Manager Association)- This site is designed for First Nation health managers to access credible sources of information related to COVID-19. To access this service, call the toll-free number at **1-855-446-2719**, or email InfoPoint@fnhma.ca

Alberta Health

- Coronavirus info for Albertans: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Alberta Health Services

- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>
- Indigenous Peoples & Communities (COVID-19):
https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17101.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKqLrALUp06_wGmSxUc

Indigenous Services Canada COVID-19 (Updates available in several Indigenous languages)

- COVID-19 & Indigenous Communities: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581964230816/1581964277298>

Mental health and coping resources are available for individuals who are struggling or need a little extra support.

- The Mental Health Help Line [1-877-303-2642](tel:1-877-303-2642) is available 24/7 to provide advice and referrals to community supports near you.
- Hope for Wellness Help Line [1-855-242-3310](tel:1-855-242-3310), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Kids and teens can call the Kids Help Phone: [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868).
- Text COVID19HOPE to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to a free service supporting mental health and wellness in a time of stress and isolation.
- Family Violence Resources: <https://www.alberta.ca/family-violence-prevention-resources.aspx>
- **Text4Hope-Addiction Support** is designed to help Albertans dealing with psychological issues related to addiction. Text "Open2Change" to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe.

Anyone with specific questions or concerns about their health is encouraged to call Health Link at 811 for health advice.

APPENDIX A: Additional COVID-19 Data in First Nations On-Reserve in Alberta

Fig 1.

*Onset date is the earliest of the “date of onset of symptoms” and “specimen collection date”

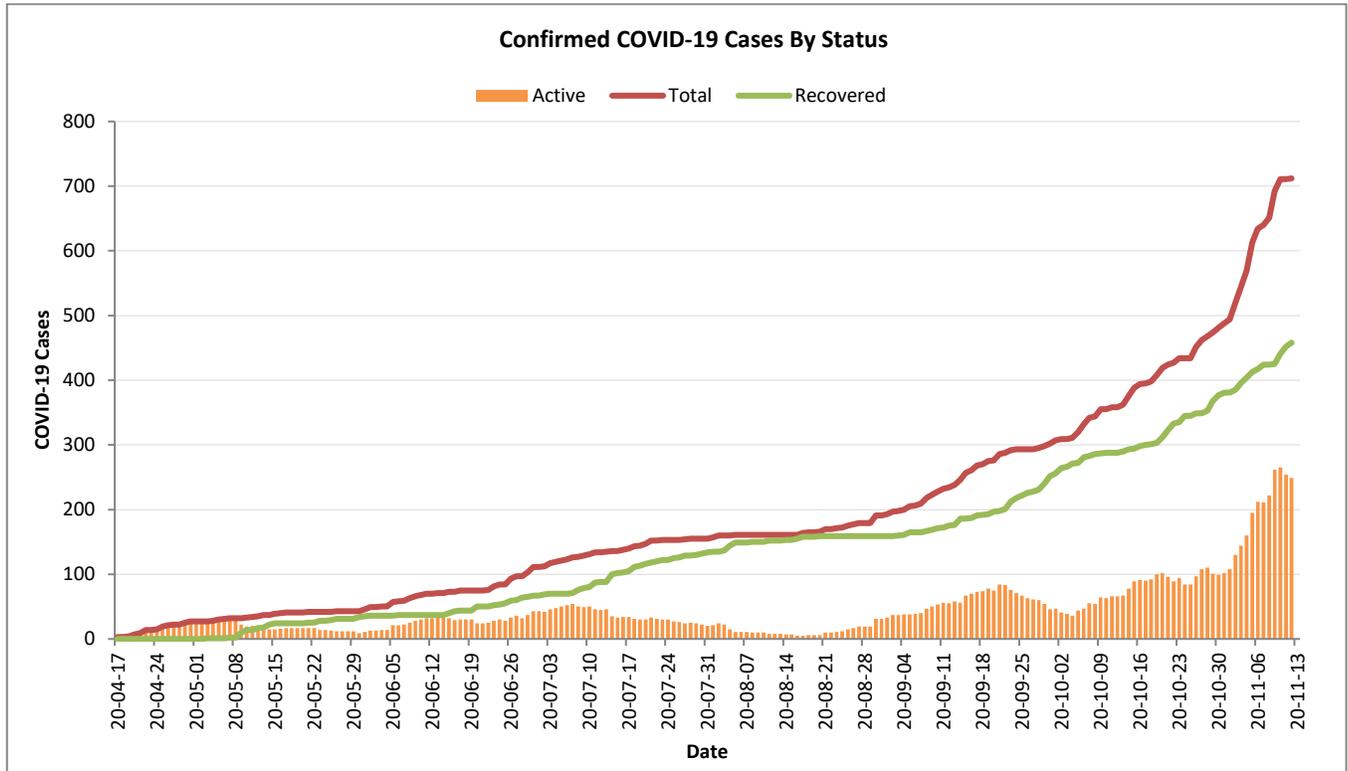


Fig 2.

