

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #31 / April 29, 2020

Good Afternoon,

Not all heroes wear capes. You've likely heard that expression with respect to our healthcare workers, first responders and the many essential workers who are showing up to work, despite the risks, so we can stay home and be safe. Today we want to expand our understanding of heroes to include the leaders who are speaking truth, putting the health needs of their community first even when those decisions are unpopular. In today's update we recognize the strength it takes to do that even when your heart is heavy with loss and concern.

Stay the course
help limit the spread of COVID-19



Please watch this animated video:
Physical distancing: Stop the spread of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Like many of you, the community of Ahousaht is sharing video updates with their members.

Chief Councillor Greg Louie was joined yesterday by Namgis Chief Don Svanvik.

We all stand with Namgis as they deal with an outbreak on Cormorant Island and extend our condolences.

The Ahousaht leadership felt that members could learn from Chief Svanvik's first-hand experience, from one remote community to another.



Chief Svanvik, began by saying few could imagine COVID-19 would be an issue in their community.

"I think there may have been a feeling that because we're kind of remote, it wouldn't touch us," he said. His message is to follow the health experts. "We have to physically distance when we go out. You got to stay apart, you got to have that distance. And we feel funny about it. But you never know who's got it. You've got to follow those rules."

And he recognized that it is not easy to take these precautions. "It's really counter-intuitive – you don't get to hug your grandson or your friend, or your sister when you see them down the road, you stay apart. In order to keep people safe, you just got to do it."



If you missed it, **this video message from Elder Albie Charlie of Cowichan Tribes** has a powerful message. "Today we're isolated, but that isolation is nothing new to our people, we've been doing that for centuries. Anytime a sickness comes we look after ourselves. If we don't there will be no one to look after our children."

We believe we are better when we share our knowledge. We are pleased to continue to share resources and updates being offered by communities.



QUESTION OF THE DAY

What is the Government of Canada doing to ensure vulnerable First Nations youth get the support they need during this time of physical distancing, such as improved Internet access and access to phones and other technology?

The Government of Canada recognizes the scope and seriousness of the health and mental health challenges facing Indigenous communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Hope for Wellness Helpline provides immediate, culturally safe, telephone crisis intervention support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis, 24 hours a day, seven days a week (1-855-242-3310 or the online chat at hopeforwellness.ca).

Additionally, in BC, community members can call the First Nations Health Authority's 24/7 culturally safe KUU-US Crisis Response Services at 1-800-588-8717 (or 250-723-2040 for child and youth / 250-723-4050 for adult and Elder).

For any other COVID-19 health-related questions, or for further information, the First Nations Health Authority would like you to use the following:

- For general inquiries – COVID19@fnha.ca
- For FNHA and community health care providers (CHNs, HD, etc.) or CDE planning questions – CDMgmt@fnha.ca
- For individual health care and COVID-19 questions, call 811 or your primary care provider.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 – SURVEY SERIES

Statistics Canada is collecting data on an ongoing basis to better understand the impacts of COVID-19. Your response will provide insight into the challenges we all face as the COVID-19 situation evolves in Canada. This week's survey is: **Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians – Your mental health.**

The survey takes only a few minutes to complete. Your participation is important!



In addition, on March 18, 2020, the Government of Canada announced the COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. This plan includes \$305 million for a new, distinctions-based Indigenous Community Support Fund to address immediate needs in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. A portion of these funds has been set aside to support regional, urban and off-reserve Indigenous organizations.

These new funds are providing Indigenous leadership with the flexibility needed to design and implement community-based solutions to prepare for and react to the spread of COVID-19 within their communities. **These funds could be used for measures such as support for Elders and vulnerable community members, mental health assistance and emergency response services.**

SERVICE CANADA OUTREACH

Service Canada is taking steps to ensure everyone can connect and get the full benefit of the Government of Canada supports available in these challenging times. To support access to critical programs and services for clients, including First Nations members, without access to technology, Service Canada Community Outreach and Liaison Service are available to offer alternate service delivery methods that will continue to support accessing critical programs, services and benefits.

 **1-877-631-2657**

UPDATES

Details on the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)

Some good news regarding eligibility for First Nations governments and their businesses for the **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)**. We have been working closely with our partners in the Department of Finance to bring clarity to this issue and the federal government has further adjusted the eligibility for the CEWS to Indigenous government-owned corporations and partnerships to support them in their efforts to retain employees who are still on the payroll and to rehire workers previously laid off so that they are able to count on a steady income through the current challenges.

CEWS eligibility will apply to corporations carrying on a business that are at least 90 per cent owned by one or more Indigenous governments, as well as partnerships carrying on a business where the partners are Indigenous governments, eligible Indigenous government-owned corporations, and other eligible employers. These entities will be eligible for the CEWS, provided that the other eligibility criteria for the subsidy are met. Please note that taxable Indigenous-government-owned corporations, which would include taxable corporations where an Indigenous government holds a less than 90 per cent interest, are already eligible for the CEWS, provided that the other eligibility criteria for the subsidy are met.

Tips from Canada Revenue Agency

The Canada Revenue Agency participated today in a webinar hosted by the First Nations Public Service Secretariat. They covered some important points to help communities navigate the many benefits available, in particular the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)** which provides a payment of \$2,000 for a four-week period (equivalent to \$500 a week) for individuals who meet the required conditions.

Karen Martin and Saverio Desantis of the CRA reminded participants that to be eligible for all the benefits and credits that in individual may be eligible for they have to do their taxes even if they had no income in the year or their income is tax exempt.

They also encouraged people to reach out if they have questions as so many First Nation issues are unique to the individual. Contact information as follows:

COVID-19 information	canada.ca/cra-coronavirus
Child and family benefits	canada.ca/child-family-benefits
Disability tax credit	canada.ca/disability-tax-credit
Canada workers benefit	canada.ca/canada-workers-benefit
CVITP	canada.ca/taxes-help
CVITP - volunteer	canada.ca/taxes-volunteer
My Account	canada.ca/my-cra-account
E-services	canada.ca/cra-electronic-services
Benefit enquiries	1-800-387-1193
Territorial tax and benefit enquiries (accessible from 867 area code only)	1-866-426-1527
Individual enquiries (and to get Forms)	1-800-959-8281
CRA's automated phone service for CERB	1-800-959-2019 or 1-800-959-2041



PARTNER INFORMATION

State of Emergency Extended

The **provincial state of emergency is being extended for the third time**, to support the extraordinary measures taken by the Province under the Emergency Program Act to keep people safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, has officially extended the state of emergency through the end of the day on May 12, 2020.

The Province has created 1 888 COVID-19 (1 888 268-4319) to connect British Columbians needing non-medical information about COVID-19. This includes the latest information on travel recommendations and physical distancing, as well as access to support and resources from the provincial and federal governments. The call line is available seven days a week, from 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Pacific time),

Ongoing Support For Women And Children Experiencing Violence

Mitzi Dean, Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity, issued a statement on the **Province's ongoing support for women and children experiencing violence during the COVID-19 pandemic**. The Province has secured nearly 300 additional spaces in communities throughout B.C. for people leaving violent or unstable situations, with more spaces to come. These are in addition to more than 100 transition houses and safe homes that the Province funds on an ongoing basis.

If you or someone you know is experiencing violence or abuse, please contact VictimLinkBC at 1 800 563-0808 or by email: VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca.

ISC BC REGION TOWN HALL #3 WITH FNSEA & FNEC

Join Catherine Lappe, RDG ISC BC Region, Tyrone McNeil, President of the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEC), Edith Loring-Kuhanga, President of the First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA), and the BC Ministry of Education, as they speak about First Nations' education in BC during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Friday, May 1
11 a.m. - noon
REGISTER ►

NATIONAL INFORMATION

- **Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks**
- The Government of Canada has made announcements regarding financial assistance for those who will be impacted during these unprecedented times – these individuals and businesses are encouraged to apply for assistance. You can find further information on how to apply for financial or economic support at: Canada.ca/coronavirus and [Questions and Answers on the Canada Emergency Response Benefit](#).
- For a great description of what flattening the curve means, consider watching [Prime Minister Trudeau's video tweet](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- [Resources for Canadian Businesses](#)
- [Transport Canada – COVID-19 measures, updates, and guidance issued by Transport Canada](#)

USEFUL LINKS

- Economic measures to help stabilize the economy during this challenging period. As information is rapidly changing we strongly encourage you to visit the [federal](#) and [provincial financial supports](#) websites often for the latest information.
- First Nations Health Authority – [Information for community leaders](#)
- [COVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool](#)
The app will let you receive the latest updates, trusted resources, and alerts. The Self-Assessment Tool is built in.
- With the help of BCFC, the First Nations Public Service Secretariat has posted a [COVID-19 Resources for All BC Individuals](#).

REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests: aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

