

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #72 / January 11, 2021

Good afternoon,

On Thursday, January 7, 2021, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry issued an extension of the province-wide restrictions suspending all events and social gatherings through to midnight, February 5, 2021.

In addition to these orders, Dr. Henry recommends everyone limit their travel between communities and outside of the province unless it is absolutely essential for work or medical care.

As new COVID-19 cases continue to emerge in communities across BC, Dr. Henry urged people to “recommit to our efforts to slow down transmission.” She adds “Show your friends and neighbours they can count on you to make the right choices, every day, and together we will see brighter days once again.”

While the danger clearly remains, we are so pleased to see that vaccination has begun in rural and remote First Nations across the province. We celebrate with you this life-saving development. Thanks to the Gitga’at First Nation and First Nations Health Authority for allowing us to share the video in the banner below, and to the Tahltan Nation for sharing these inspiring photos of the roll out with us.

We have links to many other videos and photos being posted by your communities in the Community Connections section below.

We know vaccination is a personal choice. If you’re looking for information to help promote participation in your community, please visit FNHA’s [What You Need to Know About the COVID-19 Vaccine](#) information page.

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) is leading with regard to requests for the vaccine and other health-related needs. You can direct requests to the FNHA COVID in-box covid19needs@fnha.ca. For more general enquiries, please see the FNHA’s [COVID-19 Community Guide](#) (updated Dec 29, 2020).



Moderna vaccination roll out in the Tahltan communities of Iskut and Telegraph Creek week of December 29

The facts about COVID-19 Vaccines

What is the COVID-19 vaccine?
Vaccines are products that produce immunity to a specific disease like COVID-19. When you are immune to COVID-19 that means you can be exposed to it without becoming sick or if you do become infected, it prevents more severe illness.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GET A COVID-19 VACCINATION?

THE VACCINES WORK	THE VACCINES WILL SAVE LIVES	THE VACCINES ARE SAFE
COVID-19 vaccines provide excellent protection against the virus that causes COVID-19, preventing up to 95% of infections.	The vaccine protects you and the people around you, too. The more people that are vaccinated, the harder it is for COVID-19 to spread.	Just like all vaccines approved for use in Canada, the COVID-19 vaccines have been rigorously tested and carefully reviewed by Health Canada.

PROTECTING FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IS A PRIORITY

December: COVID-19 vaccines began rolling out to First Nations in BC at the end of December, 2020, and will be made more widely available over the next few months. The FNHA's Medical Officers strongly recommend that First Nations people opt to get the vaccine to protect you, your loved ones, Elders, and others in your community.

Even with the COVID-19 vaccines, we need to continue practising all recommended public health measures.

STAY STRONG, STAY THE COURSE.

For more information, visit www.fnha.ca

Revised Dec. 30, 2020



VACCINES SAVE LIVES

Caring Communities and the COVID-19 Vaccine

“The vaccine in protecting your household. When you are protecting your household you are protecting your family. Your protection is for everyone else and that should be good for all the residents at Gitga’at.”

— Elder Helen Clifton from Gitga’at First Nation



UPDATES

Indigenous Community Support Fund

As shared in **Update 71**, the **Fall Economic Statement 2020** commits the Government of Canada to provide a further \$380 million in 2020- 21 for the **Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF)** to help ensure that the needs of Indigenous communities will continue to be met during the second wave.

Additionally, at the end of December, Minister Marc Miller announced that **\$30 million under the Emergency Food Security Fund** of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is also being used to bolster the ICSF bringing total investments under the ICSF to over \$1 billion since the beginning of the pandemic.

We were pleased to support many proposals before the end of 2020, but as previously noted, the demand far outstripped the available resources. We anticipate being able to support many more community applications on already submitted proposals with eligible costs in the near future and will share more details as soon as they become available.

TELL YOUR MEMBERS!

For support in filing their income tax, members can call the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-800-959-8281, email **S87ECOVIDG@cra-arc.gc.ca** or get support online at the **Canada Revenue Agency**.

In addition, 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. You can call them at: 1-877-631-2657.

Remarks from the Deputy Chief Public Health Officer on COVID-19

Canada's Deputy Chief Public Health Officer **provided remarks concerning the continuous fight against COVID-19 in Canada**. The address, on December 30, 2020, states that by September 2021, the Government of Canada is on track to offer vaccinations to everyone in Canada for whom vaccines are approved and recommended. Canada will also continue to monitor the cases of the COVID-19 variant identified in the United Kingdom that have been reported in Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec.

FREE WEBINAR: LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CANADA REVENUE AGENCY BENEFITS AND CREDITS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Some of the benefits and credits to which members may be eligible for are the Canada child benefit, Disability tax credit, Child disability benefit, Goods and Services Tax/ Harmonized Sales Tax Credit, and the Canada Workers Benefit. Also, find out how to apply for and determine eligibility for the new Canada Recovery Benefits.

REGISTER

January 13, 2021
(Wednesday)
1:30 - 2:30pm PST

FIND FINANCIAL HELP DURING COVID-19

Your members may be eligible for support through other programs as well. **Answer some questions to find financial help during COVID-19**. While we cannot guarantee eligibility, we can point members to the program details.

PARTNER INFORMATION

BC commits \$105 Million to Support Tourism Sector

The Province of British Columbia is creating a dedicated relief funding stream to quickly support people and businesses in BC's tourism sector which have been hard hit by the travel restrictions in response to COVID-19.

In response to recommendations brought forward by its **Tourism Task Force**, the Province has **announced** \$100 million in dedicated relief funding for the tourism sector. In addition, the Province is also allocating \$5 million to Indigenous Tourism BC to administer relief grant funding targeted for Indigenous businesses.

BC will work in partnership with Indigenous Tourism BC on an Indigenous-led funding program specifically designed for Indigenous tourism operators. The dedicated relief funding for the tourism sector is intended to help people get through these next few months so they can welcome visitors back once it's safe to do so.

POVERTY REDUCTION GRANTS SUPPORT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Just a reminder that your neighbouring local governments will have the opportunity to apply for the second round of the **Province's Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program grants** to help develop local strategies and solutions to address poverty.

Projects must involve key community partners, such as local First Nations or Indigenous organizations.

Applications for the second intake will be accepted until midnight (Pacific time), March 5, 2021.

Enhanced Incentives for Energy-Efficient Upgrades and Construction

Noting that many people are continuing to work from home due to the pandemic, the Province of BC is doubling CleanBC Better Homes retrofit rebates for select home-heating and energy-efficiency upgrades. The incentive is intended to make the switch to cleaner, more efficient technologies easier and support jobs across the province as part of the COVID-19 recovery. British Columbians wanting to switch from fossil fuel-based heating to cleaner, more energy-efficient heat pumps also have access to low-interest financing as part of CleanBC.

For Double the Rebate Offer details, including specifics on how to apply, visit:

betterhomesbc.ca/rebates/cleanbc-double-rebate/

To learn more about the new low-interest financing program, visit: betterhomesbc.ca/rebates/financing/

Applicants must pre-register for a promo code by March 31, 2021, and complete their upgrades by June 30, 2021, to participate.

In addition to these limited-time offers, two new programs have launched to further assist British Columbians in constructing and renovating more energy-efficient buildings. The **Better Homes New Construction Program** offers builders thousands of dollars for new residential construction in accordance with the BC Energy Step Code or for homes built with high-efficiency heat pumps. The **Commercial Express Program** provides financial incentives to builders who are retrofitting existing buildings, with a streamlined application process. Both programs are administered by BC Hydro.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, First Nations have responded to support each other and their most vulnerable members in new and creative ways. We'd like to share some of the videos and messages First Nations are posting about their efforts to save lives with the vaccine roll out.

- **Takla Nation** – Vaccinations have begun in Takla. People in the community wanted to share their experience on camera so they compiled as many clips into one video as they could!
- **Tahltan** – Vaccines have arrived to much excitement
- More photos from the **Gitga'at First Nation Health Department COVID-19 vaccine clinic**

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE FOR CANADA



- Only vaccines that are safe and effective will be approved for use in Canada.
- A vaccine will be available to everyone.
- Because there will be limited quantities at first, once a vaccine is approved for use, key populations will need to be prioritized.
- Building up immunity takes time.
- COVID-19 vaccines will be free.
- Vaccination is a choice you should make to protect yourself, your family and community.
- We are committed to working with Canadians and keeping you informed.

See the **poster by Public Health Agency of Canada** for more information.

USEFUL LINKS

- **Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Indigenous communities**
- **COVID-19 vaccines and Indigenous peoples**
 - » **Moderna COVID-19 vaccine: what you should know**
 - » **Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine: what you should know**
 - » **Canada's COVID-19 Immunization Plan**
- **COVID-19 Awareness Resources and Videos**
 - » **COVID-19: How vaccines are developed (video)**
 - » **Vaccine development and approval in Canada (infographic)**
 - » **What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine for Canada (poster)**
 - » **Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Statement Series on COVID-19: mRNA Vaccines**
- **Taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Protect your health and your community** – Preventing infection, handwashing and drinking water advisories, how to prepare, what to do if you are sick or caring for someone sick
- 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.
- **New financial support** – developed by ISC, this page provides financial support information for Indigenous individuals, students, businesses, organizations and communities.
- Latest Service Canada programs and services posters
 - » **General**
 - » **For seniors**
 - » **For youth**
 - » **For businesses**

REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests:

aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

- **Regional Director General**
Catherine Lappe / 604-340-7703
- **Associate Regional Director General**
Bill Guerin / 604-803-9476
- **Director, Community Infrastructure**
Paula Santos / 604-790-8451
- **Director, Programs and Partnerships**
Wendy Rogers / 604-363-8117
- **Director, Lands and Economic Development**
David Russell / 604-817-2644
- **Director, Funding Services**
Jody Kaden / 236-334-4742
- **Director, Child and Family Services**
Chiara Taylor / 778-668-9067
- **Director, Community Development**
James Moxon / 604-367-8241
- **Director, Corporate Services**
Harold Powell / 604-219-1737

