



Indigenous Services Canada's Wave 2 health preparedness and response to COVID-19

For more information on COVID-19:

- Canada.ca/coronavirus
- Canada.ca/coronavirus-info-Indigenous
- 1-833-784-4397

Indigenous community support

- \$685 million through the new Indigenous Community Support Fund to address immediate and continued needs in First Nations, Inuit Nunangat and Métis Nation communities, as well as to support urban and off-reserve Indigenous peoples:
 - \$305 million announced on March 18, 2020
 - \$75 million invested on May 21, 2020 for Indigenous organizations providing services to Indigenous peoples in urban centres and off-reserve communities
 - \$305 million announced on August 12, 2020, which includes needs-based funding through applications to the department

Ongoing public health response

- \$285.1 million to support ongoing public health response to COVID-19 in Indigenous communities, funding community-led responses to the pandemic and providing targeted increases in primary health care resources for First Nations communities. In case of outbreaks, funding can be drawn upon to provide surge capacity and additional support for community-based services in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities

Schools safe restart

- \$112 million announced on August 26, 2020 for First Nations to prepare for safe reopening of First Nations schools
- Working with First Nations partners to ensure that this funding reaches communities as soon as possible
- First Nations communities will continue to make decisions on re-opening based on what they have determined is the safest option for their students

Testing and contact tracing

Testing

- Maintaining access to swabs distributed from the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) for First Nations communities and health authorities
- Ensuring all department-operated primary care facilities (nursing stations) and health centres have the capacity to collect swabs, which are processed by provincial laboratories
- Collecting data from regions (by community) using a tool created by the department, including availability of testing, swab supply, and the number of swabs collected
- Indigenous Services Canada is working with the NML at the Public Health Agency of Canada to increase access to authorized rapid point-of-care tests, in particular for remote and isolated Indigenous communities

Contact tracing

- Working closely with public health authorities at all levels when a test-positive case of COVID-19 is reported, with next steps guided by the community's emergency pandemic plan and local public health protocols
- Working in collaboration with the First Nations Health Managers Association to provide training for community health workers as surge capacity during second wave

Planning for vaccine distribution

- Considering Indigenous peoples as a top priority in the national federal, provincial and territorial framework developed by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization
- Working with various program and regional areas within Indigenous Services Canada, First Nations communities and other Indigenous partners, as well as federal, provincial and territorial partners to provide an integrated and coordinated approach to vaccine deployment, including capacity and training to deliver a vaccine
- Participating in Indigenous Service Canada's National Immunization Network (which includes NIOs and other partner organizations) to ensure that health facilities in First Nations communities have the necessary immunization supplies and personal protective equipment to administer a vaccine when available
- Working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners and the Public Health Agency of Canada to discuss how to prioritize vaccine supply among Indigenous peoples and communities, to complement the national prioritization framework

Health infrastructure and health human resources

- Reviewing the adaptation and accommodation of health infrastructure to ensure physical distancing and other public health measures are in place
- Working directly with Indigenous communities to identify local surge health infrastructure needs, helping communities strengthen their capacity to screen, triage and isolate in a COVID-19 outbreak
- Supporting First Nations communities through use of health human resources, including nursing, paramedic and community health workers, with a range of skill sets and expertise
- Training public health nurses to collect swabs for COVID-19 testing
- Triage and responding to any nurse expressing an interest to work for Indigenous Services Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch within 24 hours
- Providing guidance to support ongoing service delivery by health professionals and on safe resumption of services in communities
- Working with health professionals to deploy additional supports into communities or by virtual care
- Continuing with the Indigenous Services Canada CARE (Collaborative Air Response Endeavour) initiative, established in spring 2020, to facilitate air transport of healthcare professionals into remote and isolated communities across Canada, using a system of dedicated chartered aircraft with strictly controlled health and safety measures

Mental health and substance use

- \$82.5 million invested to support surge capacity and the adaptation of existing mental wellness services to address COVID-19 mental wellness needs in Indigenous communities, including:
 - expanding access to culturally appropriate services such as on-the-land activities and community-based health supports
 - adapting mental health services using virtual technology to meet increased demand
 - supporting Indigenous partners in developing innovative strategies to address substance use and to improve access to treatment services

Preparation for flu season

- Flu, pneumococcal immunization and Tamiflu pre-positioning:
 - Redoubling efforts to increase vaccine coverage and early use of flu antivirals
 - Flu vaccine is in production now to ensure timely availability in September 2020. Public Health Agency of Canada moved quickly with provinces and territories to secure additional supply to be made available in Canada
 - Public Health Agency of Canada secured enough product for provinces and territories, ensuring it is sufficient for public and private long-term care home residents aged 65 and above, including in First Nations communities
 - Indigenous Services Canada regions are working with their provincial and territorial counterparts to determine allocation and shipment of the flu vaccine in First Nations communities on reserve
 - Indigenous Services Canada has advised regional offices to purchase Tamiflu in preparation for the upcoming flu season
 - Indigenous Service Canada officials have been recommending early use of influenza antiviral treatment for high risk individuals in First Nations communities
- Promoting awareness to increase vaccine intake and its' importance in light of COVID-19, with flu poster featuring Elders and families, social media component focusing on vaccine safety and flu 101 webinar

Modelling and data governance

- Collecting case data among First Nations on reserve as well as other publicly reported data for a risk assessment dashboard
- Developing interactive maps and dashboards based on data modelling (such as regarding the potential severity of disease) to assist with decision-making at all levels
- Supporting Indigenous-led efforts in data analysis, interpretation and modelling, including with the First Nations Information Governance Centre, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Chiefs of Ontario
- Supporting Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Métis National Council and the First Nations Information Governance Centre with effective information sharing, data governance and distinctions-based data analysis
- Participating in Canada's Immunity Task Force, as well as in the Assembly of First Nation's COVID-19 Task Force Data Working Group, to map the scope of COVID-19 in Canada
- Supporting data capacity building efforts by facilitating partnerships between Indigenous partners and other government departments