



Indigenous Services Canada Services aux
Autochtones Canada

Indigenous Services Canada, Alberta Region
9700 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4C3

October 24, 2020

Chief Tony Alexis
Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation

Dear Chief Alexis,

As the Indigenous Services Canada, Alberta Region (ISC-AB) Deputy Medical Officer of Health, it is my duty to inform you that a case of COVID-19 was confirmed today, October 24, 2020, in an individual residing in Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation. I want to acknowledge the significant efforts that have gone into planning and preparing for this moment and recognize the extensive community supports and measures in place.

At this time, an active public health investigation, inclusive of case management and contact tracing is underway. The ISC-AB Medical Officer of Health and Communicable Disease Control teams are working closely with your health staff to support response efforts including testing measures to be undertaken early next week with priority for those with [symptoms](#) or identified as close contacts. Individuals identified as close contacts will be promptly notified by a public health professional and provided with additional instructions.

Initial results of the investigation indicate that there may have been low-risk exposure two of the Nation's Building. Both buildings should be cleaned and assessed by an Environmental Public Health Officer prior to reopening.

Recognizing this is a challenging time, I would like to take this opportunity to provide specific recommendations that can be reinforced with your community to minimize the impact of the virus:

1. Community cooperation with the health professionals conducting case management and contact tracing efforts is of the utmost importance to ensure timely and effective communicable disease control measures.
2. Individuals with symptoms must immediately self-isolate and contact the health centre.
3. Enhanced community-wide implementation and adherence to routine public health and communicable disease control measures. Please see the attached annex for additional details on the current public health measures.

I understand that this information may generate anxiety in your community and requests for detailed information. It is important to know that the privacy and disclosure of personal health information is protected and governed under the provincial *Health Information Act*. This Act identifies the very specific parameters under which health information is protected and prevents disclosure of personal health information outside of the circle of care. Therefore, I cannot emphasize enough that only health providers within the circle of care team have access to the personal health information of the confirmed cases and contacts of COVID-19 in the community.



Outcomes of the current public health investigation will be shared with your respective emergency management contacts, however, no personal health information will be provided.

I understand that essential travel may still be required to support some community member's needs. I would therefore like to highlight the additional voluntary public health measures implemented in the Alberta Health Services, Edmonton Zone. Effective October 8, 2020, it is recommended that individuals:

- Limit social and family gatherings to no more than 15 people;
- Wear non-medical masks in all indoor work settings, except when alone in workspaces such as offices or cubicles where separated by at least two metres from others;
- Limit the number of cohorts to no more than three (a core/household cohort, a school/work cohort, and one additional sport, social or other cohort). Note that cohorts are the small groups of people that can spend time together without following COVID-19 precautions like distancing.

Finally, I understand that self-isolation measures for individuals with confirmed cases or those identified as close contacts can present challenges and result in stigma and unnecessary speculation. During this challenging time, it is important to ensure individuals are treated with compassion, kindness and dignity. ISC-AB is committed to working with you and your community's health and emergency management staff to support pandemic response, including the timely and transparent sharing of information. Additional provincial information may be accessed online by visiting: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>.

The health and safety of your community remains our priority. Thank you again for your patience and support as we continue to work together during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chris Sarin
Deputy Medical Officer of Health, FNIHB-AB

Cc: Tracy Potts, Health Director, Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation
Rhonda Laboucan, Regional Executive Officer, FNIHB-AB
Dr. Wadieh Yacoub, Senior Medical Officer of Health, FNIHB-AB
Dr. Parminder Thiara, Regional Director, Primary and Population Health, FNIHB-AB
Simon Sihota, Regional Environment Public Health Manager, FNIHB-AB



Annex: Current Public Health Measures

Alberta is now in Stage 2 of re-opening and some measures have been relaxed, but it is still important to continue to follow public health guidelines to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. All Albertans have a responsibility to [help prevent the spread](#). Take steps to protect yourself and others:

- practice [physical distancing](#) and wear a mask in public;
- practice good hygiene: wash hands often for at least 20 seconds, use hand sanitizer, cover coughs and sneezes, and avoid touching face;
- monitor for symptoms: cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat;
- self-isolate for the legally-required 10 days if you have any symptoms that are not related to a pre-existing illness or medical condition; and,
- take the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) to access testing.

All Albertans are still required to practice physical distancing and are now required to wear a mask in public places where it is difficult to maintain 2 metres of physical distance. Gathering restrictions for Stage 2 are 50 people maximum for indoor gatherings, 200 people maximum for outdoor events such as festivals, performances and sporting events, and 100 people maximum for other outdoor/indoor events such as weddings, funerals and other indoor events where people remain seated. Note, additional voluntary public health measures effective October 8, 2020 in the AHS Edmonton Zone.

When a case of COVID-19 is confirmed, the health of the impacted individual and their contacts is closely monitored. ISC-AB ensures all individuals adhere to the *Mandatory Quarantine and Isolation: Chief Medical Officer of Health Order 05-2020*. **Individuals are legally required to isolate if they have COVID-19 or quarantine if they are a close contact to someone who has COVID-19.** Public health orders can be legally enforced to protect the health and safety of others.

In addition to the self-isolation guidelines for those in contact with an individual who may be positive for COVID-19, anyone with new symptoms, even if they do not meet the above criteria, should self-isolate for 10 days from the beginning of symptoms or until they are feeling well, whichever takes longer. Guidelines for self-isolation are to:

- stay home – do not attend work, school, social events or any other public gatherings;
- avoid close contact with other people, including members of your household and especially seniors and people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems;
- don't take public transportation like buses, taxis or ride sharing, where possible;
- watch for symptoms in yourself or a family member.

Moving forward, it will also be important to ensure as many community members as possible receive an influenza immunization. An influenza immunization (flu shot) will not prevent COVID-19, but it will reduce the chances of getting sick with influenza (flu) or spreading it to others. All Albertans 6 months and older are encouraged to get an influenza immunization. It



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is especially important for seniors and people with chronic health conditions as they have higher risk of severe complications. By keeping influenza counts low, we can:

- make sure our health care system has capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- let health care workers focus on treating people with other illnesses and injuries; and,
- reduce outbreaks in care facilities.

The vaccine is now available free of charge to all Albertans contact Nunee or visit the [Alberta Health Services webpage](#).