

May 21, 2020

Public Update on COVID-19

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Public Statement

As surrounding regions begin deconfinement, local leadership has begun adopting self-isolation laws to assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19 by anyone returning to the communities from essential travels. The Mandatory Self-Isolation Law will be implemented in parallel to the Deconfinement Plan for Eeyou Istchee.



As families begin their return to communities from goose break, the next weeks will be critical to observe. Public Health will be closely monitoring for any signs of outbreaks and respond accordingly.

Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Eeyou Istchee remains stable at 10 cases from the beginning of the pandemic with 4 active cases as of today. 6 have now officially recovered. Now that we have been 16 days without any new cases, it appears that the Cree Nation has successfully passed the milestone of reintegrating return students without an increase in COVID-19 cases. This means the self-isolation measures and other precautionary measures have worked well. Hence, as of today;

Whapmagoostui
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394 regular tests have been administered

Chisasibi
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383 returned negative

Wemindji
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Eastmain
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57 additional asymptomatic screening tests, with longer waiting period for results from these tests. Hopefully, the resource issue at the lab will be addressed to accelerate process.

Waskaganish
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Nemaska
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Waswanipi
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Ouje-Bougoumou
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Mistissini
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Washaw Sibi
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MoCreebec
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It is clear that the hard work of the leadership and community members is working, explaining why Eeyou Istchee is in a very different situation than Montreal and Laval. These regions have still observed an alarming number of cases in the last 2 weeks, although the situation in these regions appears to be plateauing which is a good sign. Things are improving but there is still a way to go.

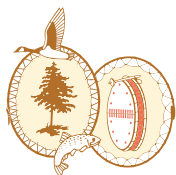
As part of the Quebec government deconfinement plan, certain travel restrictions and other precautionary measures are gradually being lifted; this means the epidemiological situation in other regions could start changing. This will be a critical time for the North, as this could lead to more risk of importation of cases in our region.

Region 10 - Nord du Quebec still has had only a total of 8 cases. In the last two weeks there has been only 1 case. Region 10 is allowing greater travel for the local population which means that the Cree leadership will have to monitor closely the region because this an increase in risk for the area. The Cree Health Board is monitoring cases in Region 10, 2 and 8 on a daily basis. Region 8 (Abitibi) and Region 2 (Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean) still have rates of transmission that are a bit high. This represents a risk for Region 10 and this is why the increased mobility that is now being observed between these 3 regions is not recommended for Eeyou Istchee.

Region 8 - Abitibi has had 12 cases in last two weeks (most from Rouyn-Noranda)

Region 2 - Lac St-Jean has had 28 cases in last 2 weeks from (most from Saguenay)

Therefore, cases still more active in the two neighboring regions of Abitibi and Lac St-Jean.



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Therefore, for now, the **Areas Representing a Risk** are:

- Anywhere outside Eeyou Istchee and Region 10
 - 25 km South of where Rivière Coigny intersects Route 109, approximately 150 km south of Matagami;
 - 5 km South of Rapide-des-Cèdres on Route 113, approximately 20 km south of Lebel-Sur-Quevillon on Route 113;
 - 50 km South of Chibougamau on Route 167;
- Any mine site
- Any forestry camp
- Any Hydro-Quebec site

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Chisasibi
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Wemindji
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People are reminded that as they begin to travel or consider traveling it is extremely important to practice physical distancing and precautionary measures. Everyone must do what they can to protect fellow community members. People are also discouraged from planning travel to risky areas. Please also note that your community may have a more narrowly defined area where it is considered safe to travel and it is very important to remain informed of your local self-isolation requirements.

The stability of our region allows us to consider deconfinement. We have the ability to decide on our own instead of the generic Quebec plan which is appropriate for urban centers but not necessarily for our region. We are not deconfining before June 9th. If things remain stable we can then move forward. It is issue of stability not number of cases. Our ability to detect and contain cases are key, including the contact tracing. A deconfinement fact sheet is being finalized by the Cree Health Board that will describe 5 phases and will be distributed shortly.

In light of the local mandatory self-isolation law, the Cree Health Board will be monitoring very closely the risks associated with other regions. We have a Public Health Risk Assessment Committee, which will be constantly assessing risk as we target June 9th to lift the SQ checkpoints in the region. The question will constantly be asked on if we move forward or not through each phase.

The Cree Health Board continues to prepare for construction activities while respecting the restriction on outside labour. This is achieved by focusing on projects that can be done by local labour and addressing needs by purchasing existing facilities.

Cree School Board

The Cree School Board continues to develop plans for students in August and is working to support post-secondary students who will return south in the fall. Students will be facing a different situation going into the next school year and the school board is working to adapt. Meanwhile, there is a strong focus on ensuring learning through online resources. A reminder to all secondary students: there is still time to earn credits before the deadline of **June 5!** Sign on to the platform at eeyoueducation.ca/olp and click on your grade.

To focus on meeting the needs of special education students, the School Board has made available resources for parents on the Online Learning Platform and is collaborating with the Cree Board of Health to support parents and families.

The School Board is working toward possible charter air service during the month of June to assist teachers to return home in the south. Any travel leaving the communities will be monitored both by the School Board and Public Safety.

Good news: Sabtuan Adult has secured 250 laptops through the Eenou Eeyou Community Foundation to help students with technical equipment and support.