



June 9, 2020

Public Update on COVID-19

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Public Statement

It is compliance with the advice from the Public Health Department, the coordination of Cree leadership and the Direction that has been given at the Regional Level and especially at the Local level that has created this safe environment in Eeyou Istchee.

The advice that we have received from Public Health has protected us and helped us stay on the right path, we need to continue to trust their advice, it is even more important as we begin to deconfine. We need to feel confident as our communities open up to each other and be even more confident that the physical distancing and precautionary measures that we must follow will continue to protect us as we begin to travel out of our communities.

We must continue to be vigilant to protect our fellow communities, our incredibly valuable elders and other vulnerable sectors of our community. When you arrive at community checkpoint and asked if you have been to a high-risk area in the last 14 days and are tempted to not tell the truth so you can avoid a Mandatory 14-day isolation, think of them. We are free to manage risk for ourselves the way we see fit, but how fair is to take away that same choice from the vulnerable people of our community. If there is an outbreak, because of the contact tracing capacity that exists in the province of Quebec, the population will know where it came from.

The Cree leadership is extremely proud of how Cree community members are standing up and making important sacrifices for fellow community members, this is what makes our Nation strong and resilient. It is what guarantees the endurance of the Cree people and Cree culture.

Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

The Cree Health Board is very grateful to the community members and staff from all the organizations who are working so diligently to protect our communities. Monitoring, respecting physical distancing and precautionary measures will be extremely important in the coming weeks as begin our deconfinement. COVID-19 is still at the doorstep of Eeyou Istchee and we have to work hard to keep it that way.

It has been more than 2 incubation periods since there was a case in Eeyou Istchee. We remain with a total of 10 cases where all have recovered, and it is safe to begin Phase 1 of deconfinement.

Regular testing for COVID-19 in Eeyou Istchee is currently at:

- 468 regular tests have been administered
- 451 returned negative
- 7 waiting for results

The Cree Health Board is doing more screening tests focusing on Health Workers, patients returning home and other high-risk groups such as elder’s home workers. The current Screening results are:

- 270 screening tests
- 33 awaiting results
- 237 returned negative

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Wemindji

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Eastmain

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Nemaska

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It is important to keep in mind that the Cree Health Board screening capacity although growing is limited for the time being. Currently there is a testing capacity of 20 tests per day and the Cree Health Board would like to increase this capacity. For this reason it is important to understand that the Cree Health Board has to be selective in who they choose for screening focusing on the front line workers, such as those that work with the elderly.



With regards to travel, the Cree Health Board would like to remind people that it is considered safe to travel for non-essential reasons within Eeyou Istchee, between communities and within Region 10.

Further, the Public Health Department has been monitoring Region 8 – Abitibi which has only had 6 cases in the last two weeks for the whole region and Region 2 – Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean which has only had 7 cases in the last two weeks for that whole region. For both regions the cases are sporadic, there is no community transmission meaning it is known exactly how the cases came into the regions, mainly from worksites. These regions are therefore now considered safe and people should feel safe going into these areas provided they continue to follow physical distancing and precautionary measures.

In particular there are new protocols in place in hospitals in these regions so that people should feel safe when they go to hospitals for appointments. It is important that people understand that they can do more damage to themselves by not following up on medical appointments in these regions than staying home due to fear of COVID-19 when the risk is quite low.

Montreal is still different from most regions in Quebec with more than 2,000 cases over the last two weeks. The situation is improving rapidly but it is still too early for Eeyou Istchee to consider safe.

Therefore, Self-Isolation as of June 9th, 2020 is not required when with travelling within Eeyou Istchee, Region 10, Region 8 and Region 2, there continues to be the exception for worksites that receive workers from Montreal. It is important to understand that this is not a retroactive recommendation. If someone is completing a Mandatory Self-Isolation for having been to these areas before they were considered safe, they must complete their self-isolation as prescribed.

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

- Anywhere outside Eeyou Istchee, Nunavik, Region 10, Region 8 and Region 2
- Any mine site
- Any forestry camp
- Any Hydro-Quebec site

Traveling to outside of these areas will require self-isolation.

It is extremely important to practice physical distancing and precautionary measures. Everyone must do what they can to protect fellow community members. 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.

Cree School Board

The Cree School Board continues to support Secondary 4 and 5 students to ensure that they complete their school year. Students, parents and guardians are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting their school administration or by emailing:

secondary4@cscree.qc.ca or secondary5@cscree.qc.ca

The deadline to submit final assignments is Friday, June 12, 2020.

Students can log onto www.eeyoueducation.ca/olp to access their assignments.

The Cree School Board also continues to manage the transportation of teachers and staff while heeding the current travel restrictions and specifics of the deconfinement plan.

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