



Cree Nation Leadership COVID-19 Briefing Public Statement July 28, 2020

Status of Pandemic

Worldwide COVID-19 continues to spread at alarming rates. Many jurisdictions struggle to contain the virus and others are having troubles with flare-ups as they try and deconfine.

Within Eeyou Istchee, communities continue to do well, which is a testament to local leadership and more importantly to the people of Eeyou Istchee who respect and remain committed to physical distancing and precautionary measures.

With 10 cases recovered, regular testing for COVID-19 in Eeyou Istchee is currently at:

- 705 regular tests have been administered
- 687 returned negative
- 8 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:

- 834 screening tests
- 820 returned negative
- 14 awaiting results

Recently there was an instance where an individual failed to respect the Local Isolation Law and visited social gatherings. The individual caused a considerable number of people to be subject to a precautionary isolation and monopolized the time of the Public Health Department staff tracing and contacting those that are at risk. It is extremely important that people realize the burden they can place on the health administration and community members when they don't respect isolation requirements.

Education

The Cree School Board is continuously making adaption for all schools to make them safer in consideration of reopening, i.e. the Cree School Board has ordered 900 laptops for both youth and adult sectors. Further analysis will be carried out as the Cree School Board prepares for all scenarios should the need for online learning arises. In preparation for the school year, we would appreciate local feedback and participation in the planning process for reopening schools. Teachers schedule to return on **August 8th and 10th, 2020**, at that point, they will isolate for two weeks. There will be service to support them.

Adult Education is scheduled to commence on **Tuesday, September 8th, 2020**. Vocational training will move ahead with a course that can be delivered online.

Cree School Board Post-Secondary Student Services is making adaptations to allow post-secondary students to study from their community.

The Cree School Board is also working on logistics to assist students who wish to return to their place of study this Fall.

Finally, the Cree Teacher Training Program will continue this Fall as it is urgent to ensure that we have Cree teachers in our communities.



Travelling

Region 8 –Abitibi continues to be closely monitored by leadership as a total of six (6) cases have now been identified and contained by thorough contact tracing efforts from the region’s Public Health. There is no reason to immediately change the status of Region 8, but it is important that people remember how quickly things can change and ensure that they are only travelling when they need to.

Region 2 –Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean continues to struggle with cases having had over 50 cases in the last two weeks with a recent addition of a case.

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

- Anywhere **outside** Eeyou Istchee, Nunavik, Region 10 – Nord du Quebec and Region 8 – Abitibi
- Any mine site
- Any forestry camp
- Any Hydro-Quebec site

Travelling to any of these areas will require self-isolation.

It is extremely important for people to understand that until there is a vaccine, there will always be a risk associated with travelling. The farther you get from your house, your community, your region, the greater the risk is of contracting COVID-19. It is imperative that people remain cautious, no one can say that travelling to any other area is safe, all that we can try to determine is how much riskier it is.

Further, Cree travellers should exercise caution beyond what is permitted in other jurisdictions. For example, movie theatres, bars and sit-down restaurants are open in other jurisdictions and have been linked to a considerable increase in the risk of outbreaks. Cree travellers are therefore recommended to avoid all sit-down restaurants, movie theaters or bars when visiting in other jurisdictions.

The Government of Quebec has made masks mandatory indoors in public places throughout Quebec; people are therefore cautioned that they should be prepared to comply when travelling to other jurisdictions.

The Public Health team will continue to provide support to communities and organizations in deciding which services or activities to resume and how to do it safely. Organizations may send their request to: 18tcr.phcovidteam@ssss.gouv.qc.ca or covidrisk@cngov.ca

If you feel like you may need someone to talk to during these challenging times, please contact the Cree Health Board’s **Psychosocial Health** Line: **1-833-632-4357**. The Cree Health Board would also like to inform people that specialists with a traditional approach to healing are also accessible through the same number.