



Cree Nation Leadership COVID-19 Briefing Public Statement September 8, 2020

Status of Pandemic

Jurisdictions in Canada and Quebec are more and more concerned with the likelihood of an early second wave of COVID-19.

In Eeyou Istchee it is important that we remain confident and optimistic about how we will get through the COVID-19 without becoming complacent. The Mandatory Self-Isolation laws in Eeyou Istchee are working.

Thursday September 3rd, 2020 the COVID-19 testing lab at the Osisko mine site returned a positive test. This was after weeks of consistent negative testing results being automatically shared by the company with Cree Nation representatives. A worker from a Southern jurisdiction that WAS NOT designated as an area of risk, tested positive upon arrival and was not permitted to circulate on-site, rather they were evacuated upon confirmation of the positive test result. All workers that travelled or have been in close proximity of the worker in question have been retested all tests have come back negative. The company will continue to administer multiple tests to ensure that COVID-19 is not circulating. Although, no one wishes that the individual develop detrimental symptoms, it is important that we thank the individual for respecting distancing and precautionary measures like wearing a mask; he did an excellent job of protecting coworkers. The incident demonstrates that physical distancing and precautionary measures during travel are effective. We can also be confident that the testing protocols that companies like Osisko and Stornoway have put in place are effective and help ensure that workers have a safe environment and do not increase the risk for family members who await them on their return home. The local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws, which provoked the requirement for the testing protocols on works sites is working and are a very important tool to keep COVID-19 out of our communities.

Status of Other Jurisdictions

Quebec is seeing a gradual increase in the number of cases which is cause for concern and the Government has been raising the possible reintroduction of “lock down measures”. The Government of Quebec has developed a mapping tool to try and address the issue of risk among regions which is extremely challenging concerning the risk tolerance among regions could vary considerably.

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

- 957 regular tests have been administered
- 942 returned negative
- 5 waiting for results

The Cree Health Board continues to make efforts to increase screening capacity 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:

- 1,146 screening tests
- 1,140 returned negative
- 6 awaiting results



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Travelling

Everyone is reminded that the Cree Health Board will be making greater efforts to re-introduce more specialists into the communities. It will be much safer for Eeyou Istchee to have the critical health specialists come into the communities rather than a high numbers of patients travelling to the South.

The Specialists are respecting strict screening protocols, supervision and precautionary measures that includes the administration of multiple tests. It is important to keep in mind that for the last seven months, the COVID-19 cases in Eeyou Istchee did not come from the medical professionals that come to our communities. As the province braces for a second wave we are going to need the services of these specialists along with the other health care professionals we rely on.

Neighbouring regions to Eeyou Istchee continue to do well with no significant outbreaks since mid-July. The region of Quebec City is of growing concern and may be the subject of a Bulletin to alter its risk status should thing not improve in the coming days.

Aside from improvements in the region of Sudbury, the status of regions in Ontario remains unchanged, where the regions around North Bay, Timmins and Moosonee continue to do well.

Stornoway and Osisko continue to be the only two companies in Eeyou Istchee that have adopted COVID-19 testing protocols to allow us to be confident that their works sites do not represent a risk for COVID-19.

After evaluation of the **Areas Representing a Risk**, those individuals who have in the last 14 days travelled:

- anywhere outside Quebec, except for the Ontario regions of Sudbury, Porcupine and Timiskaming, which includes the municipalities of Sudbury, Timmins, Moosonee and North Bay;
- within Quebec to:
 - ◊ Region 6 – Montreal
 - ◊ Region 13 – Laval
 - ◊ Region 14 – Lanaudière
 - ◊ Region 15 – Laurentians
 - ◊ Region 16 – Montérégie
- any Hydro-Quebec site;
- to any mine site, please note:
 - ◊ Workers coming from the Windfall Mining Exploration Site by Osisko Mining Inc with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;
 - ◊ Workers coming from the Renard Mine Site by Stornoway, as of September 8th, 2020 with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;
- any forestry camp, please note:
 - ◊ Workers coming from the Forestry Camp at km 105 on the James Bay Highway with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate effective immediately;

will be required to self-isolate for 14 days under the Local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws.



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Travelling Continued

Therefore, people coming from Regions 1-5, 7-12, 17 and 18 in Quebec and the regions Sudbury, Porcupine, Temiskaming and North Bay in Ontario DO NOT need to self-isolate under the local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws.

It is extremely important for people to understand that until there is a vaccine, there will always be a risk associated with travelling.

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 risk of outbreaks. Cree travellers are therefore recommended to avoid all sit-down restaurants, movie theatres or bars when visiting in other jurisdictions.

Eeyou Istchee Deconfinement Plan

Our local Mandatory Self-Isolation law allows us to remain in Phase 4 of the Deconfinement Plan while other jurisdictions have to move into re-confinement in anticipation of the second wave. The cooperation and the respect of physical distancing and precautionary measures has allowed the Cree Nation to protect our Health care capacity and protect community members from COVID-19.

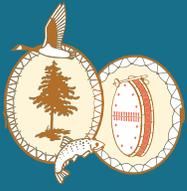
- Activities like weddings, graduations, etc. subject to the gathering size restrictions
- Indoor gatherings (50 people max.)
- Outdoor gatherings (150 people max.)

It is our respect for physical distancing of 2 metres and respecting other precautionary measures that allowed us to reach Phase 4, and it will be our continued respect for these measures that will allow us to stay in Phase 4 for as long as possible for the benefit of all community members.

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.



Cree Nation Leadership COVID-19 Briefing Public Statement September 8, 2020

Education

Schools have been opening with staggered start times according to their readiness to support the necessary COVID-19 precautionary measures. The focus of these first few weeks is on ensuring that students and families become familiarized and comfortable with the new routines. The new standards are being followed all in schools and buses.

We have also increased the number of teaching positions, and janitorial and maintenance staff to accommodate the COVID-19 public health measures.

All students must answer the Daily Youth Student Health Check before entering their school, which is available at <https://eeyoueducation.ca/youth/health-check>. Parents are asked to complete this online form before each school day.

In-person Vocational Training programs resumed this week on September 8. Adult General Education will begin in all communities on September 15, following a hybrid online/in-class model. To ensure a safe and measured reopening, only selected continuing students (those who attended last year) will be able to return to school on these dates. New students may apply online now but will not begin until later in the school year.

“I would like to tell those Post-Secondary students returning South for their studies to take care of themselves and their families during these challenging times. Do not hesitate to reach out to the Cree School Board or other Cree leadership if you need help or assistance, we admire your dedication and would like to do everything we can to assist you as you are all working for a brighter future for all of us.” - Grand Chief Dr. Abel Bosum

Reliable Sources

People are advised to continue exercising caution on where they get their information in relation to COVID-19 and to keep in mind that the reliable sources of information remain:

■ eeyouistcheecovid19.org/

■ cngov.ca/covid-19/

■ creehealth.org

■ eeyoueducation.ca

■ quebec.ca/coronavirus

■ canada.ca/coronavirus