



INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA'S PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO COVID-19



General Approach

- Provinces and territories provide direct health care services to all Canadians, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis.
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) is engaged with provinces and territories to ensure that First Nations, Inuit and Métis are well covered by public health measures.
- ISC is making funding available to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis concrete initiatives improving and adapting the public health response to the needs of their population.
- In First Nation communities, where it supports the delivery of health services and emergency management preparedness and response, ISC doubles its efforts to ensure resources are available to meet the demands.



Preparedness

- Working to help First Nations communities to prepare and respond to public health emergency
- Funding First Nation communities in pandemic planning and activation
- Funding capacity for Inuit and Métis to effectively participate in national, provincial, territorial planning and response
- Knowledge mobilization and training support by funding First Nation organizations or through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) regional offices
- Training of health providers working in First Nations communities in use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Inventory of medical equipment and supplies across First Nations communities
- PPE stockpile to supplement what exists in provinces for First Nations communities
- Shared Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) guidelines on measures communities can take on, social distancing, school and daycare closures and mass gatherings, including for remote and isolated settings



Health human resources

- Supporting First Nations communities through use of health human resources
- Nursing and medical surge capacity supports
- Paramedic support
- Community health representative and public health assistant skill building and support
- Training of public health nurses to administer COVID-19 testing



Infrastructure

- Working to respond to First Nations community infrastructure needs to support response
- Respond to community requests on PPE and other health supply requirements
- Respond to community requests for additional surge capacity in water, food or other supply chain components
- Availability of portable and temporary shelter solutions for health services (assessment and training)
- Availability of portable and temporary shelter solutions for accommodations of additional service providers and self-isolation



Infection prevention and control

- Sharing information, training and increasing capacity to support response, including public service announcements in Indigenous languages
- Promote public health measures for individuals and health providers, including:
 - reminding the public of the importance of self-isolation of 14 days after travel outside of Canada
 - reminding the public of the importance of not working while symptomatic, especially in the case of health workers
- Provide training of community workers and health providers on infection prevention and control
- Require daily self-screening of health service providers, and testing prior to returning to communities where recommended
- Fund communities and service providers to increase their capacity for infection prevention and control, including First Nations-run schools, boarding homes, family violence shelters and friendship centres



Medical transportation

- Supporting medical transportation of First Nations and Inuit clients while minimizing transmission
- Operational guidelines through NIHB to adapt medical transportation policies especially for individuals with higher risk factors to use private modes of transportation
- Infection prevention and control support for service providers such as boarding homes



Governance

- Working for a coordinated and consistent Canadian approach to COVID-19 to ensure the needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities are met
- ISC Minister is on special Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 response
- ISC chief public health officer on FPT Special Advisory Committee (SAC) reporting to the FPT Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health
- ISC and PHAC co-chairing with Indigenous, federal, provincial and territorial partners a COVID-19 Remote and Isolated Settings Task Group within SAC
- Supporting Indigenous communities through ISC network of Regional Medical Officers, National Health Emergency Network and Communicable Disease Emergency Working Group with First Nations partners
- Regular briefings with the Assembly of First Nations Executive and Chiefs Committee on Health
- ISC is a member of the Inuit Public Health Task Group
- Working through the Metis Health Committee involving ISC, PHAC, HC, CIRNAC



Communications and Surveillance

- Developing and disseminating communication messaging through ISC COVID-19 Single Window to networks of networks
- ISC COVID-19 Communications Working Group with First Nations, Inuit and Métis representatives
- ISC website content aligned with PHAC public health guidelines
- Public Service Announcements in multiple Indigenous languages
- Video on overall ISC COVID-19 response
- Regional office and regional medical officers regular meetings, teleconferences, bulletins and sharing of provincial communiques with chiefs, health directors, health workers and other partners
- Multilateral calls with partners at the national and regional levels
- Adapted flu surveillance tool to track COVID-19 across First Nations communities
- Tracking tool to develop dashboards on key indicators of COVID-19 response in First Nations communities

