May 28, 2020

Public Update on COVID-19

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Cree School Board
Commission scolaire crie

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Wemindji
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Eastmain
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Public Statement

The Cree Nation has a heavy heart today as our thoughts and prayers are with the Family of Chief Fred Blackned as they lay him in his final resting place. As the community of Wemindji goes through these trying times it is hard not to remember all those brave men and women who during very challenging times made a decision for their people approving and signing the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement which we continue to benefit from today. We remain inspired by our past leadership as we face these very challenging times today.

Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Eeyou Istchee received good news today that it remains stable at 10 cases from the beginning of the pandemic and more importantly we now have 0 active cases. All 10 have now officially recovered. Considering that it is a week post-goose break this is very good news and testament to the resolve of the Cree Nation in respecting physical distancing and precautionary measures.

People will still need to respect physical distancing and other precautionary measures. As we enter this new phase, the Cree Health Board has been doing more and more screening, with no positive test results so far. Hence, as of today;

429 regular tests have been administered

408 returned negative

11 waiting for results

Looking at our neighboring regions, the Cree Health Board has observed that from May 15th to May 26th:

Region 2 – Saguenay-Lac St-Jean: has had 7 cases

Region 8 – Abitibi: has had 4 cases

It would appear that there is no communal transmission and that each case from these regions were isolated incidents. Representatives of the Public Health Department need to ensure that the contract tracing and test capacity in these regions is working well so that the leadership can make an informed decision about designating these areas as areas that do not pose a risk for the community members of Eeyou Istchee. There is reason to be hopeful that if people continue to be responsible in this region, respecting physical distancing and precautionary measures that this can be done in the near future.

The region of Montreal continues to see a slow and gradual decline of cases. The modeling and the projections show that the hospital capacity remains manageable and patients who need to be transferred that should not be concerned.

The jurisdictions having problems in Canada right now are Ontario. There is an assumption that this might be related to the lack of testing capacity.

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

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

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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 Cree Health Board is using this time to assess what facilities they will prioritize for development in the future. Long-term care centers for Eeyou Istchee are a clear priority during this pandemic. Special needs facilities are also urgently needed. The pandemic also confirms the undeniable argument that hemodialysis patients need services to be available in the territory and the Cree Health Board will be pushing in this direction.

Eeyou Eenou Police Force

All officers remain healthy, implementing procedures and local restrictions, with the EEPF.

22 COVID infraction tickets, not respecting physical distancing. This week there are none, being proactive.

Lot of pressure on gates of citizens trying to come into the territory for fishing and other outdoor activity.

Cree School Board

More than half of Secondary IV and V students are engaged and participating in the OLP. The rest have been contacted and are encouraged to start. Schools are making big efforts to engage their students.

General Education for Adults has been able to adapt to the current environment by offering online classes. Due to their nature, Vocational programs have not transitioned to an online environment. Sabtuan Adult Education is assessing potential scenarios and developing a return-to-school plan for fall 2020 while prioritizing the health and safety of students and teachers. Aiming to have an Action Plan by the second week of June.

A reintegration plan for the head office is being developed and will include a phased approach as well as health protocols that will be put into place. Reintegration plans for schools are being developed with the Department of School Operations.

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:

https://eeyouistcheecovid19.org/
www.cngov.ca/covid-19/
www.creehealth.org
www.eeyoueducation.ca
https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/
https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.htm