May 7, 2020

Public Update on COVID-19

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Cree School Board
Commission scolaire crie

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Public Statement

Cree leadership is observing and monitoring as different sectors and industries begin their activities to determine the efficiency of measures to control the spread of COVID-19. Ultimately, it will be up to the residents and guests of Eeyou Istchee on how successful we will be in containing the spread. The unity and coordination of Cree leadership has been very important but the compliance with strategies and measures by the people and entities of Eeyou Istchee will be key.

The Cree leadership is working with the neighbouring municipalities of the regions to analyze what is best and how to protect our overall region, together. Eeyou Istchee was not yet announced as one of the regions scheduled to open. The Cree and non-Cree leadership is taking this opportunity to collaborate for the re-opening of the region along with a letter to the Premier indicating this position.

The Cree population should be aware that even if the Government announces the opening of industries such as mining exploration, the understanding is that companies will have to coordinate the development and implementation of their COVID-19 Management Plan with the Cree Nation Government prior to initiating their activities on the territory.

Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

It is important to heed the words of Cynthia Carr, renowned epidemiologist, who explained that when the Spanish Flu hit in 1918 it wasn't the treatment that solved the pandemic, it was the collaboration, communication and social distancing and other public hygiene measures that stopped the Spanish Flu from spreading. The Cree Health Board wants to remind people that if it was the will and determination of the people that saved lives in 1918 there is no reason not to have faith that we can achieve the same in 2020. It is imperative that the Cree Nation stick to its strategy and watch and learn what happens in neighbouring jurisdictions as they loosen restrictions.

Currently, Eeyou Istchee remains at 10 cases from the beginning of the pandemic with 6 active cases today. 4 have officially recovered.

- 328 tests have been administered
- 295 returned negative
- 23 awaiting results

In regards to examining the opening of regions and the loosening of restrictions it is important to understand that Quebec is divided in two different zones when it comes to COVID transmission profiles: hot zones in Urban centers and lower incidence zones in the rest of Quebec. Our regiEon is characterized as cold with sporadic cases and limited transmission. With this in mind, deconfinement strategies will need different approaches and it is important to do what we can to keep the lower incidence zones like Eeyou Istchee from the risk of contamination from the southern higher incidence zones.

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The Cree Health Board does not at this time advise initiating any deconfinement activities until goose break is over, which will represent an important milestone in the assessment of local transmission profile and capacity. The Cree Health Board is currently finalizing a Deconfinement Plan for Eeyou Istchee that is not based on the Quebec model which is not appropriate for Eeyou Istchee but more in line with international standards and practices. It will be a phased approach that is being shared with the neighbouring health authorities to see coordination where possible. The standards will be adapted to adjust to Eeyou Istchee realities for example reference to family units versus anonymous quantities of individuals when discussing size of private gatherings permitted.

Cree Patient Services is increasing coordination and keeping the numbers of patients that need to leave the communities for medical appointment to what is necessary. Currently there are 17 patients in Val-d'Or and 28 at Espresso in Montreal. Special procedures are being implemented for the patients in Montreal to ensure greater protection against introducing COVID-19 in the communities, for example a 7-day isolation at Espresso before a patient can return to the community and potentially adding testing patients before they return. Patients will need to be cleared by Public Health before they can return home.

Cree School Board

The Cree School Board is monitoring the online learning platform to ensure that it continues to deploy resources that will best position students for success. A note to all: the final deadline for submission of work for this school year is June 5, so there's still time to get benefit from the Online Learning Platform.

The Board is also working closely with public health in preparation for August. Both entities are monitoring the provincial process to help inform best practices going forward.

EEPF

No parties since the beginning of the week, no COVID-19 tickets. Getting ready to emphasize road security as summer is coming. Working hard with social media to gauge the pulse of the community and do their best to inform the community.

Goose break so communities are quite quiet.

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