

June 23, 2020

Public Update on COVID-19

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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

The Cree Health Board is constantly monitoring jurisdictions in Quebec but also worldwide to ensure that we have the most up to date information on strategies and lessons learned in addressing COVID-19. Watching jurisdictions even those that have done exceptionally well such as New Zealand or South Korea are demonstrating that constant vigilance is required and that things can change very quickly. The last case for Eeyou Istchee was May 1st, 2020 demonstrating that the commitment of the leadership and people of Eeyou Istchee to the current approach is sound.



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Therefore, Phase 2 can proceed in accordance with the following measures and restrictions:

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1. Increasing the size of outdoor social gatherings

A maximum of 5 households are allowed to meet outdoors, given adequate ventilation and space to allow physical distancing between people from different households. It is important to continue avoiding direct contacts (shaking hands, hugs, etc.), as well as the sharing of food, utensils, etc. Individual sports that can be practiced outside are also allowed (walking, jogging, cycling, etc.). Team sports will resume in Phase 3 only.

2. Resuming small scale indoor social gatherings

Indoor social gatherings are now allowed, for a maximum of 2 households, and only those visited already during Goose Break.

3. Reopening all local business as well as all local public services

But only if all precautionary measures are in place, including screening for symptomatic workers, self-isolating those who traveled to areas of risk, as well as making sure both workers and clients are observing hygienic and physical distancing measures recommended.

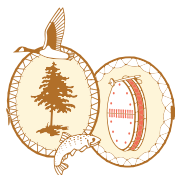
4. Resuming all non-essential health care services:

Specialists services, dentistry, or other services, as per local CMC capacity.

5. Slow increase of Daycare centres capacity

Daycare centres will continue to increase their capacity to receive children of parents gradually returning to work. Just like for other local business and organizations, centres need to have in place all precautionary measures including screening for symptomatic workers, self-isolating those who traveled to areas of risk, as well as making sure hygienic and physical distancing measures recommended are observed. Each centre should increase the number of children it can accommodate according to its rhythm of adaptation to the measures required; a maximum of 75% of the usual capacity is targeted for Phase 3 only. In addition, day camps will also be allowed to reopen only in Phase 3.

Because it is safe for people to travel between communities, the level of risk is analyzed for the whole region (and not for each community); consequently, the deconfinement phases can be uniform across Eeyou Istchee.



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



All requests will be sent a preliminary response within 24 hours. If you already have prepared a COVID Management Plan, please send it with your request as this will help accelerate the review process. If your request requires a more in-depth evaluation, we will inform you of when to expect a response and to whom your request has been transferred to for review. Organizations that can reopen in Phase 2 will be prioritized.

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As we begin a second phase of deconfinement while living beside a jurisdiction that is taking a much less conservative approach to addressing COVID-19 it is even more imperative to follow precautionary measures.

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The Cree Health Board wanted to explain that it is a very challenging time for the Cree Nation and the gold standard for suppressing COVID-19 in Eeyou Istchee which remains self-isolation. There is screening and testing that can assist but it cannot replace self-isolation because the best technology available in testing has 60% rate of reliability, this is why with series of tests being applied, self-isolation can be reduced from 14 days to 7 days but can never be eliminated as the best source for preventing COVID-19 coming into the communities.

Quebec is still seeing a steady decline in cases and things are improving quickly, hopefully the trend continues for a number of weeks so that they can be considered safe again for members of the Cree Nation to go there again. There is close monitoring of Region 02 (Saguenay-Lac St-Jean) and Region 08 (Abitibi) which were recently declared “Areas of Risk”.

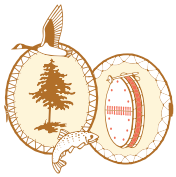
With 10 cases recovered, regular testing for COVID-19 in Eeyou Istchee is currently at:

- 533 regular tests have been administered
- 516 returned negative
- 7 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:

- 438 screening tests
- 15 awaiting results
- 423 returned negative

With regards to travel, the Cree Health Board would like to remind people that it is considered safe to travel for non-essential reasons within Eeyou Istchee, between communities and within Region 10. Self-Isolation is not required with travelling within Eeyou Istchee Region, with the exception of specific work sites.



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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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Travelling to these areas will require self-isolation.

It is extremely important to practice physical distancing and precautionary measures. Everyone must do what they can to protect fellow community members. 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.

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 School Board

As the childcare program offered by the Cree School Board ends on June 26, parents providing essential services or who have resumed work will be required to verify with their local Daycare Centre for services until summer camps resume in Phase 3 of the Deconfinement Plan.

Summer school for Secondary 4 and 5 students will begin on July 13. In-person/virtual instruction will be offered depending on the number of students registered locally. Details for students will be made available shortly.

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>

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