

Status of Pandemic

Worldwide COVID-19 cases continue to rise at an alarming rate. In Canada provinces that did well in the first wave like Manitoba and Alberta are having serious problems in managing the second wave. Unfortunately, cases in Quebec continue to increase indicating that the peak of the second wave has not been reached.

Northern regions in Quebec and Ontario continue to do very well, there is concern however with workers and visitors from the South which have been representing the new cases in the North. Work sites and constructions sites are becoming important sources of new cases in the North.

Testing in Eeyou Istchee

15 cases with 13 recovered, regular testing for COVID-19 in Eeyou Istchee is currently at:

- 1,331 regular tests have been administered
- 1,313 returned negative
- 3 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:

- 1,659 screening tests
- 1,652 returned negative
- 7 awaiting results

Travelling

Northern regions of Ontario and Quebec are doing well in keeping COVID-19 cases low and quickly undertaking the contact tracing necessary to shut down the spread once a case is identified quickly.

As Montreal, Gatineau and Region 2 – Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean are having ever increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases people are advised to exercise extreme caution traveling to these areas limiting travel for only essential reasons.

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 1 – Lower St-Lawrence
 - Region 2 – Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean
 - Region 3 – Quebec Capital
 - Region 4 – Mauricie and Centre du Québec
 - Region 5 – Estrie
 - Region 6 – Montreal
 - Region 7 – Outaouais (Gatineau)
 - Region 9 – North Shore
 - Region 11 – Gaspé and Magdalen Islands
 - Region 12 – Chaudière-Appalaches
 - Region 13 – Laval
 - Region 14 – Lanaudière
 - Region 15 – Laurentians
 - Region 16 – Montérégie
- any Hydro-Quebec site;



Travelling

- to any mine site, please note:
 - Workers coming from the Windfall Mining Exploration Site of Osisko Mining Inc with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;
 - Workers coming from the Renard Mine Site of Stornoway, with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;
 - Workers coming from the Éléonore Mine Site of Newmont, 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.

Therefore, people coming from Regions 8, 10, 17 and 18 in Quebec and the regions Sudbury, Porcupine, Timiskaming and North Bay in Ontario DO NOT need to self-isolate under the local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws.

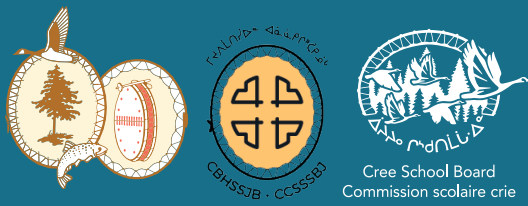
It is extremely important for people to understand that until there is a vaccine, there will always be a risk associated with travelling outside of Eeyou Istchee.

Managing Health Services

In the communities, services continue to be adapted to provide safe medical services and the Cree Health Board is making efforts to introduce more medical specialists into the communities. It will be much safer for Eeyou Istchee to have the critical health specialists come into the communities rather than 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. It is therefore safe to go to the clinic and meet with specialists in our communities.

Every effort is being made to preserve and increase the testing capacity of the Cree Health Board so that it can be used for urgently needed medical personnel, emergencies and hopefully to assist in reducing the period that students will need to self-isolate when returning home from the holidays.



Managing Health Services

Those who can benefit from testing outside Eeyou Istchee, such as workers from the Stornoway, Éléonore or Wallbridge mines are encouraged to do so because testing will not be made available to them in the community. Osisko, Newmont and Stornoway have made incredible sacrifices and efforts to make testing available to workers so that they can be exempt from local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws for which the Cree Nation will always be grateful. It should be noted that workers who travel to high risk areas prior to returning to a community will nullify the exemption that had been gained from the testing protocol at these mine sites.

People are reminded that this year more than ever, it is important to get the flu vaccine because the symptoms of the flu are very similar to those of COVID-19 and the worry is that the normal flu might cause anxiety and stress as people might think it is COVID-19 at first. Orders have been placed with the Ministry of Health so that our communities get access on a priority basis to the vaccines for the flu this year.

Eeyou Istchee Deconfinement Plan

The incredible sacrifice and discipline demonstrated by the Cree Nation over the summer in the development, implementation and compliance with precautionary measures including our local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws allows us to remain in Phase 4 of the Deconfinement Plan while other jurisdictions have to move into re-confinement:

- No masks for grade 4 and below unless the student or parents wish to wear a mask;
- Grade 5 and above masks are required in common areas but can be removed once seated.

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.)

As stated above, every effort is being made to develop a protocol which could see a reduced self-isolation period of seven (7) days, for Cree School Board students returning home for the Christmas holiday. The hope is to have the protocol ready for November 17th, 2020.

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. Any request for advice regarding the Deconfinement Plan or request for advice on what activities and how they can be carried out during a particular phase of the Deconfinement Plan can continue to be sent 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.