



ANISHINABEK NATION

COVID-19 Update - March 26, 2020

Indigenous

- More First Nation Grand Council Chiefs are speaking publicly, urging community members to stay home and follow recommendations released by the federal and provincial governments.
- According to legal experts and band officials, a number of First Nations across Canada are being pressured by the federal government to hold elections amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In an email sent by the acting director of the federal Indigenous Governance Operations Directorate, the official specified that First Nations have the right to postpone their elections but are not allowed to extend the terms of current leaders. This would consequentially result in a governance gap for groups that choose to postpone voting. - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/first-nations-elections-amid-covid-19-1.5510443>
- Minister Miller released information stating that, as of March 23rd, 78 personal protective equipment requests had been shipped or delivered to indigenous communities, with 105 more in progress.
- Indigenous Services Canada released a statement today, reiterating Minister Miller's explanation of how the Indigenous Community Support Fund from the federal government would be allocated. The release stated that funds could be used for measures including, but not limited to:
 - Support for Elders and vulnerable community members,
 - Measures to address food insecurity,
 - Educational and other support for children,
 - Mental health assistance and emergency response services,
 - Preparedness measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- To support women and children fleeing violence, ISC has also created a \$10 million fund for emergency family violence prevention shelters on reserves.

Provincial

- There are currently have 72 assessment centers across the province, and the investments announced yesterday will add 1,000 new acute care beds and 500 new critical care beds.
- In order to meet the goal of administering 5,000 COVID-19 tests each day, Ontario is looking at all resources, including the private sector, pharmacies with lab capacities, universities, and hospitals. They are utilizing everyone possible.
- The lack of re-agent has hindered Ontario's ability to increase lab-testing capacity, so they have made calls across the board for more of this, and they have more coming in within the next week or so.
- Restaurants and bars will now be able to sell alcohol as part of their take-out and delivery menu.
- Ford will be bringing the issue of price gauging to the Cabinet and will work to make price-gauging illegal during this difficult time.
- The Ontario government is enabling \$1.9 billion in relief for employers through the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board by deferring premium payments for six months for all businesses in the province. All employers covered by the WSIB's workplace insurance are automatically eligible for the provisions of the relief package and can defer payments until August 31st, 2020.



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- Health Minister Christine Elliott insists that there is no rationing of N95 masks in hospitals right now.
- The Toronto police union is calling for the force to immediately halt all unnecessary contact between officers.

Federal

- Prime Minister Trudeau says the time within which people can expect to receive their Canada Emergency Response Benefit of \$2000/month has changed from the original 10-day waiting period to 14-days after submitting an application. The online portal will launch as quickly as possible.
- The federal bill finalized yesterday to address the economic fallout associated with COVID-19 has received royal assent and is now law.
- There appears to be a new text scam going around on the new benefit. Prime Minister Trudeau has warned the public to only rely on the Canada.ca website.
- Prime Minister Trudeau spoke to G20 leaders this morning; says we can only tackle this if we work together. G20 leaders will coordinate efforts to protect the global economy. Canada is also working to make sure the WHO has the resources it needs.
- Canada is expanding manufacturing capacity and keeping supply chains moving.
- Prime Minister Trudeau has appointed Kirsten Hillman as Canada's new ambassador to the United States, who was instrumental in NAFTA and in working with the U.S. to temporarily close our border.
- Reminder that if you have returned from abroad, you have to go home and stay home for 14 days. This is now mandatory. Canada is implementing the Quarantine Act to keep Canadians safe. You could face serious fines or prison time.
- To date, the federal government has been able to meet the needs of the provinces for personal protective equipment and we will be receiving millions of additional items in the coming days to continue to meet needs. They are also getting a lot of supplies from Canadian manufacturing.
- They will ensure that border measures with the U.S. are respected. The border is currently closed to all but essential travelers.
- Canada's official stance on the possibility of the United States placing military personnel along the border is that we have the longest demilitarized border in the world and we want it to remain that way.
- The federal government is talking with banks in Canada now and encouraging them to provide a grace period on credit card payments at this time. Ottawa is looking at measures to give people greater access to credit with a much lower interest rate.

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