



# ANISHINABEK NATION

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## COVID-19 Update - April 23, 2020

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### Indigenous

- Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek (Gull Bay First Nation) has reported 6 confirmed cases of COVID-19. This is the highest number of positive cases in Ontario First Nations.
- The provincial government will work with Indigenous-led congregate care settings both on and off reserve to ensure that tools announced by Minister Smith today are available and adapted to meet their local needs in keeping their clients and staff safe.
- The B.C. First Nations Health Authority is only naming regions where cases or clusters are, neglecting to share more detailed information about which communities are being impacted. Provincial health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry says this measure is being taken to ensure those infected are protected from stigma that could keep them from reporting infection. Many Indigenous leaders are speaking out against this move, saying lack of specific information makes it difficult for communities to put medical, security and monetary resources where they are needed.

### Provincial

- A survey found that 61 per cent of businesses in Toronto would not survive over the next three months without rent relief due to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The same survey also said that 76 per cent of businesses would close down for good within five months if current restrictions remain in place.
- Toronto Public Health will now be collecting race-based data connected to the spread of COVID-19. The province of Ontario has so far failed to collect such information.
- The provincial government has now corrected a legal issue preventing Ontarians from fighting tickets during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Environmental groups have taken issue with a temporary change in regulation removing the requirement for proposals to be posted online to the Environmental Registry for a 30-day comment period. The provincial environment minister has responded, explaining that the exemption is intended only for projects related to the pandemic that need to be built quickly.
- 250 additional personnel will be deployed from the Canadian Armed Forces to 5 long-term care homes on Ontario based on need.
- Minister Smith has developed the COVID-19 Action Plan for Vulnerable People. This involves an investment of \$148 million in direct funding to a social services relief fund and \$40 million for a COVID-19 residential relief fund for homeless shelters and group homes.
- Ontario is implementing mandatory testing in long-term care homes.
- In the next 48 hours, Ontario will increase screening and contact tracing for visitors, staff and residents, mandate mask use and limit workers to one facility in congregate settings.



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## Federal

- Prime Minister Trudeau announced today a federal investment of \$1.1 billion into Canada's national medical research strategy. This funding includes \$115 million for vaccine research and treatments in hospitals and universities, \$662 million for clinical trials in Canada, and \$350 million to expand national testing and modelling.
- The government has also announced the creation of the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force. This task force will operate as a leadership group including Dr. Catherine Hankins, Dr. David Naylor, and Dr. Tim Evans, with support from Dr. Theresa Tam and Dr. Mona Nemer. Disaggregated data will be collected to understand vulnerable populations.
- Canada is now testing 20,000 people each day, but Trudeau says we must expand testing further before restrictions can be safely lifted. Ottawa has committed to testing at least 1 million Canadians in the next two years.
- The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers has asked the House of Commons to implement broader testing in order to identify which employees can or cannot continue to work. This request comes as requiring 14-day absences for officers who have had contact with people who have tested positive has caused a staffing shortage.
- SaNOTize Research and Development Corp. of Vancouver has received approval from Health Canada to begin a clinical trial of its method. It hinges on the delivery of nitric oxide gas using a specially engineered nasal spray that can calm the immune system so that the body's response to infection is less severe.
- New Brunswick biotech company LuminUltra has received its latest shipment of chemical reagent, a key chemical needed to ramp up wide-scale testing against the novel coronavirus.
- The Canada-U.S. border has opened slightly to asylum seekers under the new framework unveiled this week extending the shutdown of all but essential cross-border traffic. Those who have been crossing irregularly into Canada are still being turned back, however those who arrive at land border offices and meet certain criteria can now file refugee claims.
- Ottawa is receiving criticism after documents were released showing that the federal government cut the number of cities that store critical medical supplies from nine to six during the past two years, and consistently underspent in stockpile management over the past decade.

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