



## HEALTH CENTRE

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November 10, 2020

### Re: COVID-19 Update

Dear Members,

It still is a flurry of teleconferences, Skype, and Zoom meetings to keep updated on COVID-19. With the rise in numbers and the recent public health order, things have changed direction. I want to assure you that Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS), Northern Health, First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Emergency Management BC (EMBC), our Council, local hospital, First Nations Health Council (FNHC), and I have been working diligently behind the scenes on keeping our community safe.

I want to commend the community on keeping safe and doing what they can do to stop the spread thus far! We are not out of the woods yet and this is another critical time to do what we can to limit and stop the spread. Contacting tracing and studies have recently shown that transmission is occurring in the home, and this is what accounts for the rise in positive cases in the province.

With the number of confirmed, positive COVID-19 cases in BC rising quickly, there are changes in the way we operate. The Health Centre will be closed to walk-ins and visitors at this time, but it will remain open for those with appointments. All staff will now wear masks in the Health Centre and all patients will have to wear one while in the Health Centre, too.

All scheduled activities and events at the Health Centre are again cancelled until it is safe to resume. These events include the sweats, Talking Circle, and Community Workshop. Our wellness workers, Peter and Donna, are working on hosting these and other events virtually, so stay tuned.

However, doctors are once again available for in-person appointments at the Health Centre. If you need to see a doctor in person, please call and book your appointment with Reception at 250-567-977. If you need to see a Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) doctor or nurse by phone or Zoom, please call 250-567-3591 and ask the Medical Office Assistant (MOA). The MOA will help you set up your phone or Zoom appointment. If the MOA is not available, you can also call Judith Sanford at 250-926-0244. If you are experiencing an emergency, call 911.

The numbers in Northern Health have risen due to the recent outbreaks and clusters that have occurred in some communities. These serve as a reminder to all of us of the ongoing risks to our communities. This is still a critical time for the community to stay home and not go anywhere. We all must obey the rules for us to stay healthy. This virus is quite serious and can potentially end a life. This can be anyone. The virus does not discriminate.

I wish to remind the community that we can help stop the spread of COVID-19 by cancelling or postponing all personal or community gatherings, or by finding innovative ways to gather virtually or in a way that allows all attendees to stay two meters apart at all times. These recommendations

are not made lightly, as I acknowledge and understand the cultural significance of gatherings for our community and the sacrifices not gathering entails. From a public health standpoint, it is now important to communicate and understand the risks inherent at these large gatherings. The Public Health orders regarding gatherings continue to apply to all gatherings, including funerals and memorials. If you are hosting an event in the community, such as a funeral, wake, or any other event where more than six people may gather, there is a contact tracing form available at the Health Centre. Having this form at your event is important because it will allow Saik'uz Health to contact everyone if there is a COVID-19 exposure at the event. This will also help keep the virus from spreading, as those who attended will then know to isolate and will be less likely to pass the virus further.

We are now in the influenza season ahead that may put more of us at risk. Now is the time for all of us to regroup and refocus our efforts to keep the number of new COVID-19 cases low and slow. As we enter the flu season, it is critical continue to practice public health measures including washing hands, maintaining physical distance by keeping two meters apart from each other, wearing masks where that is not possible and where mandated, and above all to be kind, be calm and be safe.

I want to remind members: I will be the only one notified IF one of our members has tested positive for COVID-19. I will not know who it is due to privacy laws, but I will be notified. If you have not heard of a COVID-19 case in Saik'uz directly from me, then it is hearsay and rumour. Until then, keep safe, remain kind, be vigilant about handwashing, and stay home if sick.

This certainly is a difficult time for all of us, and if you need to speak with a CSFS Mental Health Clinician during COVID-19, they will be providing support via phone, text, Facetime and video conferencing. Please call 250-567-2900 and ask to speak with a mental health therapist. If you wish to speak to someone other than a CSFS clinician, you can call the First Nations Health Authority (FHNA) at 1-855-550-5454. If you would like to speak with our wellness workers, Peter or Donna, you can call the Health Centre to book a phone appointment or porch visit with one of them.

A colour code system has been distributed to the elders and chronically ill members of the community. This system is used to notify home care workers and security if help is needed. Please encourage your family members to use this system as it will help us identify if assistance is needed or not. If you need assistance, please tape the coloured square appropriate to your situation in a window where it can be easily seen from the road. If you or your family needs a colour code package, please call the Health Centre. Keep your eye out for the colours. If you see any colours, please notify the Health Center at 250-567-9773 and let us know.

If you have any questions about your health related to COVID-19, you are encouraged to call \*811 or 1-888-COVID-19 for non-medical information on the virus, covering everything from travel recommendations to social distancing, or Northern Health Online Clinic & Info Line at 1-844-645-7811. If you have any concerns or questions about our community plans, please call me at 250-567-9773.

Soo' uniten,

Regina Thomas  
*Health Manager*  
*Saik'uz First Nation*