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To: Saik'uz First Nation Membership
From: Regina Thomas, Saik'uz First Nation Health Manager
Re: COVID-19 Update
Date: April 21, 2020

Dear Members,

I want to commend you all for the work that goes into self-isolating, keeping away from others, and staying home! This will eventually pay off and come to an end. This is still a critical time for the community to stay home and not go anywhere. This means no going to town unless your need is urgent, avoiding visiting others because that is what we do, hanging out with one another in person, sleep overs for children, etc. We all must obey the rules for all of us to stay healthy. This virus is quite serious and can potentially end a life. This can be anyone—this virus does not discriminate.

Our Health Centre remains closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will reopen only when it is safe to do so. The Chief, Council, and I will be reassessing weekly about office closures and staff returns. Please see the website (www.saikuz.com/COVID-19), and the Saik'uz Facebook Page (@saikuzfirstnation) for updates on a re-open date. However, even with the closure, there are still staff present at the Health Centre doing work behind the scenes to keep the Centre, its programs, and its services afloat. Many of our services are available by telephone appointment and will continue to be so until the pandemic is over.

Again, if you need to see a Carrier Sekani Family Service (CSFS) doctor or nurse, please call 250-562-3591 and ask for the Medical Office Assistant (MOA), Karessa or Michele, who will assist you in setting up a phone appointment. If you would like to book with a specific doctor, tell the MOA. You can also call Judith Sanford at 250-962-0244. If you have an emergency, please call 911.

All medical transportation for urgent appointments must be submitted as a Benefit Exception request to Health Benefits. Clients should submit their Benefit Exception requests to Health Benefits by calling 1-855-550-5454. If the Benefit Exception request is approved, medical transportation will be arranged. Urgent appointments include, but are not limited to, prenatal confinement, dialysis, or cancer treatment.

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 or video conferencing. Please call 250-567-2900 and ask to speak with Lisa Striegler. She will assist you in setting up an appointment. There are many options to access mental health support during the pandemic. If you have any questions regarding the mental wellness support and counselling, you can call the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) at 1-855-550-5454.

Our Community Health Representative (CHR), Linda, and the CSFS Home Care Worker, Shannon, have been checking in with Elders via phone to ensure their wellbeing and keep them updated. If you or your family have a plan in place to take care of an Elder, please contact Linda or Shannon to let them know so we can limit the traffic to Elders' homes. Linda can be reached at 250-567-9773 ext. 106. and Shannon at 250-570-8052 or 250-567-9773 ext. 101.

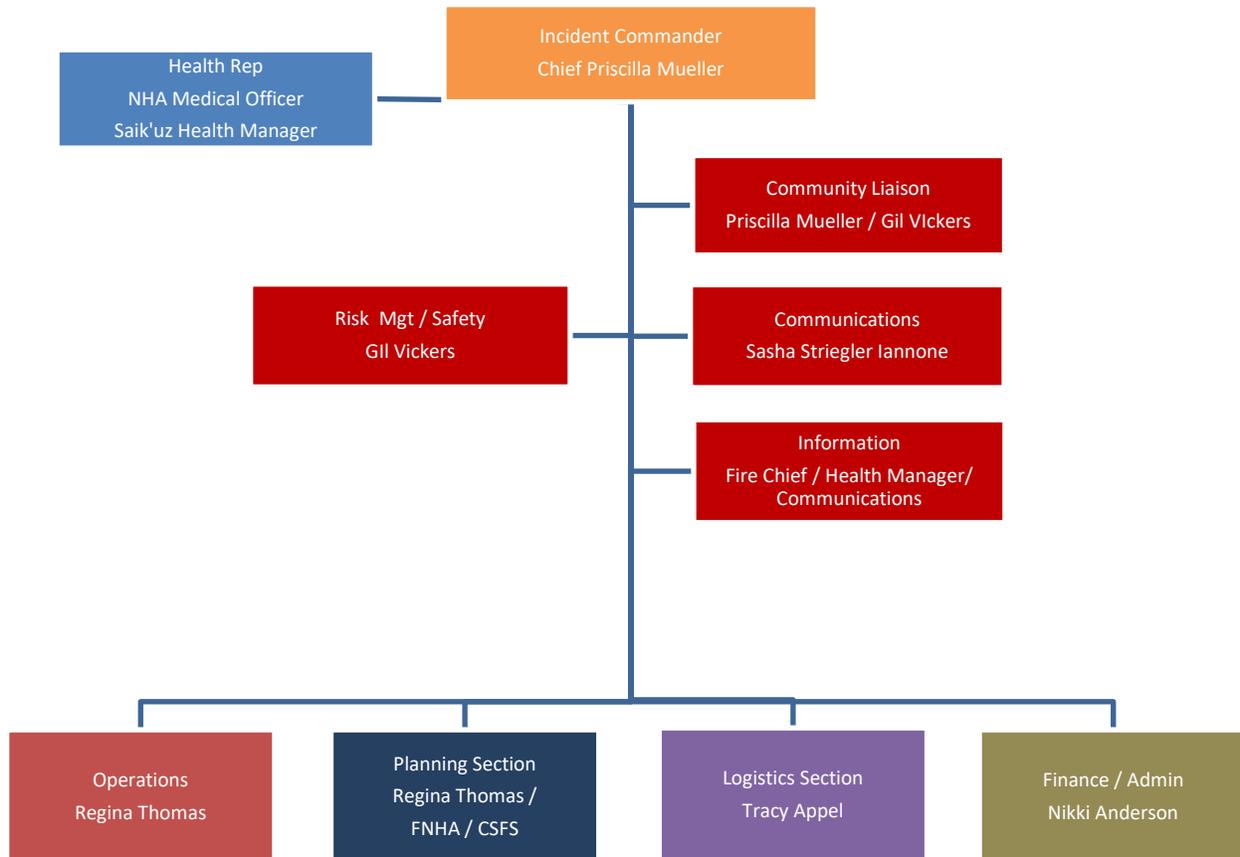
A colour code package has been distributed to the homes of Elders' and members with chronic illnesses that will be used to notify Linda, Shannon, and Saik'uz security if help is needed. If you have received a package, please tape the colour in a window where it can be easily seen from the road. We ask all members to keep their eyes out for houses with colours. If you see that someone needs help, please notify the CHR or Home Care Worker at the above numbers.

Testing for COVID -19 is now available to anyone that is experiencing any of the symptoms (fever, dry cough, shortness of breath). You are asked to call the Northern Health Clinic & Information Line at 1-844-645-7811. They will refer you to a testing site and give you instructions. Your doctor or nurse practitioner can also request testing for you. Testing is only available if you have COVID-19 symptoms.

FNHA has been working very hard to ensure our community has access to the care it needs during this pandemic, and hats off to them. When it comes to Saik'uz's community health, the chain of command is as follows: FNHA, CSFS, then the Saik'uz health staff. I have been on so many teleconferences with FNHA and CSFS, as well as the Northern Health Authority (NHA), Emergency Management BC (EMBC), and the local committees that have been formed to address the pandemic since this all began. I am grateful and very with all the work each of these health organizations have been doing to keep the people safe and well. While it may not seem like it on the outside, behind the scenes there has been some major collaboration and frameworks that have been developed to immediately improve our health care services and ensure our voices are heard.

Last week the Chief and Council, Saik'uz Administration managers, fire chief, RCMP, CHR, and I met regarding the Communicable Disease Emergency (CDE) plan that I created with help of FNHA. We updated contacts, discussed the plan, and finished with a mock up of activating the plan. It was a huge learning experience for us all, and I am confident that we are now all on the same page when it comes to the lines of communication, priorities, and needs necessary to effectively activate our CDE. This plan will be inserted into the Emergency Preparedness Plan for Saik'uz. My prayer is that we do not have to activate the CDE at all. We sure do have great members that are taking care of the community!

The following diagram is the CDE plan in a nutshell:



Each of these roles have specific tasks that will be executed if a state of emergency is declared in Saik'uz. This declaration has **not** been made. The Gathering Place will then turn into the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), and the above listed people will be the emergency response team to COVID-19. In the CDE there are several algorithms as well that will explain what is to be done in each case scenario. As we went through the CDE, I was pleasantly surprised we were already acting as a team and executing the tasks within the roles.

If you have any questions about your health, you are encouraged to call *811, or 1-888-COVID19 for non-medical information on the virus covering everything from travel recommendations to social distancing, or the Northern Health Online Clinic and Info Line at 1-844-645-7811. If you have any questions about our community plans or concerns, please call me at 250-567-9773. There is quite a long message for voice mail, but please leave a message. I am checking the voicemail daily.

Soo' uniten,

Regina Thomas