



P: 250.567.9293 | F: 250.567.2998
135 Joseph Street, Vanderhoof, BC, V0J 3A1
www.saikuz.com

To: Saik'uz First Nation Members
From: Regina Thomas, Health Manager
Date: May 25th, 2020
Re: COVID-19 Update

Dear Members,

It has been a flurry of nonstop teleconferences, Skype, and Zoom meetings to keep updated on COVID-19. I want to assure you that I, Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS), Northern Health, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Emergency Management BC (EMBC), our Council, local hospital, and the First Nations Health Council (FNHC) have been working diligently on keeping our community safe.

I would like to remind everyone our Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) team have all been apprised of the situation and planned for if COVID-19 comes to our community. As covered in the health update on April 21, the Communicable Disease Emergency (CDE) plan has been updated to now cover the aspects of COVID-19. Since then, a specific COVID-19 plan has been developed. The algorithms clearly explain what will be done in a “what if” scenario. Rest assured we do have our ducks in a row. 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, but I will be notified. Until then, our CDE plan will remain “asleep”. Continue to remain vigilant about hand washing and staying home if sick.

I want to mention that every day, sometimes every hour, something changes and we, the health care team at the Health Centre, has to remain on top of these changes and change the way we operate here at the Health Centre. Thus, we will remain closed to the public, but will be open behind those locked doors; all staff are again present at the Centre doing work behind the scenes to keep the Centre, its programs, and services afloat. Of course, emergencies will be an exception to those locked doors. Most of the services are and will be by telephone appointments until the pandemic is over.

During this pandemic, a lot of major collaboration and frameworks have been developed for immediate actions to improve our health care services and to ensure our voices are heard, contrary to popular belief. Through this negative situation we are experiencing, but we are creating a lot of positives! Improved health care, knowledge of what is and is not working. Patience is the key as we maneuver this “new” way for us all.

I want to commend us all for the work that goes into self-isolating, keeping away from others, and staying home! This is paying off as the number of COVID-19 cases in Northern Health

remains the lowest in the province. This is still a critical time for the community to stay home and not go anywhere. This means stop going to town for no reason, visiting others because that is what we do, or hanging out with one another, children sleep overs, etc. We all must obey the rules for us to stay healthy, and this virus is quite serious and can potentially end a life. This can be anyone. This virus does not discriminate.

If you need to see a CSFS doctor or nurse, please call 250.562.3591 and ask for an 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. Her number is 250-962-0244. If you have an emergency, please call 911.

Medical transportation for medical appointments is once again being processed at the Health Centre. Call us at 250-567-9773 if you have upcoming appointments that you need travel for. Mind you, some health providers are not yet back open—please check with them to see.

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 Lisa Striegler. You may have had a “porch visit” from the CSFS mental health team recently as I suggested and was given the green light for mental health to come into community to assist any of our members. There are many options to access mental health support during the pandemic. If you want to speak to someone other than CSFS, you can call FNHA at 1-855-550-5454 if you have any questions regarding mental wellness support and counselling. If you would like to speak with Peter Louie, our NNADAP worker, you can call the Health Centre to book a phone appointment or porch visit with him.

The Community Health Representative (CHR) and CSFS Home Care Worker (HCW) continue to check in with elders via phone call to check in on and keep them updated. This will likely continue post COVID-19 as a lot of positives have come from this.

A colour code system has been distributed to the elders and chronic members that will be used to notify the HCW and security if help is needed. Please encourage your family members to use this system as it will help identify if help is needed or not. Please tape the colour in a window where it can be easily seen from the road. Keep your eye out for the colours. If you see any colours in windows, please notify the Health Center at 250-567-9773 and let us know.

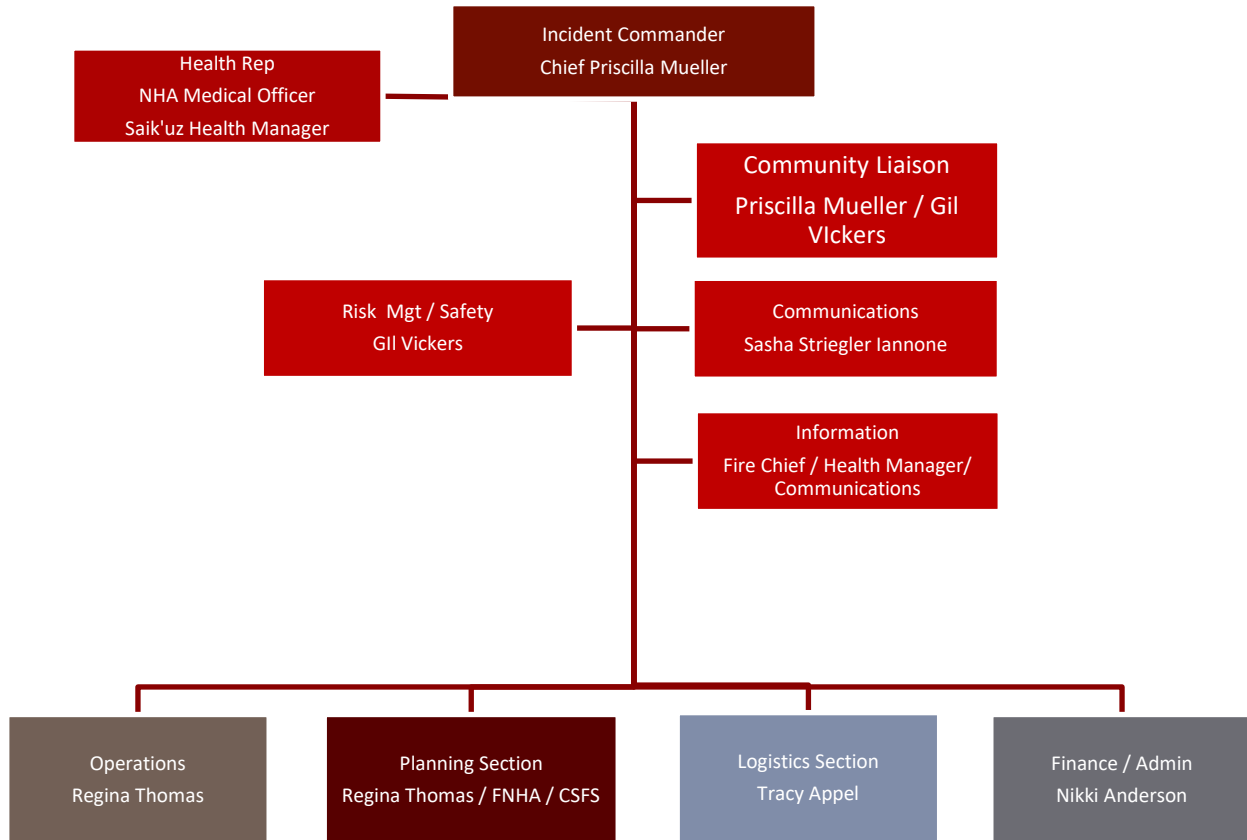
Testing for COVID-19 is now available to anyone that is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms. To access testing:

- Call the Northern Health Clinic & Information line at 1-844-645-7811 and they will refer you to the testing site and give you instructions, or:
- Your doctor or nurse practitioner can request testing for you. This testing is only available if you have any of the varying symptoms.

Leadership, managers, fire chief, RCMP, CHR, and I facilitated the Communicable Disease Emergency (CDE) plan that I created with help of FNHA. We updated contacts, discussed the plan, and conducted a drill of activating the plan. It was a huge learning experience for us all,

and I am confident we are now all on the same page when it comes to the plan and who will be doing what. 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 has specific tasks that will be executed if a state of emergency is declared in Saik'uz. This declaration has not been made. The Gathering Space will then turn into the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), and the above listed people will be the emergency response team to COVID-19.

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 & Info line at 1-844-645-7811. If you have any questions about our community plans or concerns, please call me at the Health Centre at 250-567-9773.

Soo' uniten,

Regina Thomas