



## HEALTH CENTRE

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September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Re: COVID-19 Update

Dear Members,

We are now in the 7<sup>th</sup> month of the COVID-19 pandemic and so much happened since. It still is a flurry of teleconferences, Skype, and Zoom meetings to keep myself updated on COVID-19. Again, I want to assure you that Carrier Sekani Family Service (CSFS), Northern Health, First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Emergency Management BC (EMBC), First Nation Health Council (FNHC), local hospital, and our Chief and Council have been working diligently to keep our community safe.

I want to commend you all on keeping safe and doing what they can do to stop the spread! As well, I would like to remind everyone that I will be the only person notified if one of our members has tested positive for COVID-19. Due to privacy regulations, I will not know who it is, but I *will* be notified. If you have not heard it from myself directly that there is a positive COVID-19 case in Saik'uz, then it is hearsay and rumour. Until then, keep safe, remain kind, and be vigilant about hand washing and staying home if sick.

The Health Centre is still closed to the public, but it is open behind those locked doors: all staff are present at the Centre doing work behind the scenes to keep the Centre, its programs, and its services afloat. If you have an emergency, please do contact the Health Centre. We are here to help the community and only keep our doors closed to help reduce any potential spread of the virus. Additionally, many of our services are now available by telephone appointments and we are happy to connect you to them or help you learn how to use them. Patience is key as we maneuver this "new" way for us all.

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

These recommendations are not made lightly. I acknowledge and understand the significance of cultural gatherings for our community and the sacrifices these recommendations entail. From a public health standpoint, it is now important to communicate and understand the inherent risks of large gatherings. The public health orders from Dr. Bonnie Henry, our Provincial Health Officer (PHO) regarding gatherings, continue to apply to all gatherings, including funerals and memorials.

As fall approaches, I would also like to remind everyone to continue to practice the public health measures such as washing hands, maintaining physical distance by keeping two meters apart

from each other, wearing masks where physical distancing is not possible and where mandated, and, above all, to be kind, be calm, and stay safe. This is increasingly important as we head into cold and flu season. Now is the time for all of us to regroup and refocus our efforts to keep the number of new cases low and slow.

The numbers in Northern Health remain the lowest in the province, but there has been confirmed COVID-19 cases in neighbouring communities. The recent outbreaks and clusters that have occurred in some communities serve as a reminder to all of us of the ongoing risks to our communities because of such gatherings. This is still a critical time for the community to stay home and not go anywhere. We all must obey the rules for us and our loved ones to stay healthy. The COVID-19 is serious and can potentially end a life. This can be anyone—virus does not discriminate between young, old, healthy, or ill.

If you need to see a CSFS doctor or nurse, please call 250-562-3591 and ask for the Medical Office Assistant (MOA). The MOA 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.

This certainly is a difficult time for all of us, and, if you need support or to speak with someone, our CSFS Mental Health Clinicians are providing support via phone, text, FaceTime, and video conferencing. Please call 250-567-2900 and ask to speak with a mental health therapist. There are many options to access mental health support during the pandemic. If you feel you need to speak to someone other than our on-staff clinicians, you can call FNHA at 1-855-550-5454 and ask about mental wellness support and counselling. If you would like to speak with one of the Saik'uz NNADAP workers, Peter or Donna, you can call the Health Centre to book a phone appointment or porch visit with them.

A colour code package has been distributed to the elders and chronically ill members in our community. This code that will be used to notify the Health Centre's Home Care Workers and Saik'uz Security if help is needed. Please encourage your family members to use this system as it will help us identify if they are safe or not. Simply 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 other than white, please notify the Health Center at 250-567-9773 and let us know.

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. You can also call 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.

Soo' uniten,

Regina Thomas  
Health Manager