

COMMUNITY UPDATE #13

Work from Home Measures Extended until June 14th Updates on COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout & Rapid Testing Units

May 12, 2021 – Nipissing First Nation (NFN) continues to take a cautionary approach to reopening our offices to staff as COVID-19 activity across the province remains high, and the rise in Variants of Concern (VOCs) requires our continued vigilance.

The Nipissing district's case count has remained low throughout the pandemic thanks to the sacrifices we have all been making. We need to continue following public health measures to keep our numbers low and to protect our loved ones and fellow community members. We know that the situation can change quickly, and the vaccine roll-out process has to catch up.

By extending our work from home measures until **Monday, June 14th**, we are minimizing the potential for exposure to COVID-19 for our employees and community members. Until our community has built up immunity by receiving vaccines, we believe that allowing staff who can work from home to continue doing so is a prudent measure to help keep everyone as safe as possible.

NFN's approach has been proactive to allow time to plan and adjust in response to frequent changes in provincial measures to minimize disruptions to our operations as much as possible. We have consistently aligned our operations with provincial orders and public health measures, and we will continue to take additional measures to protect our community and staff from the spread of COVID-19.

We urge all community members to continue following public health measures and the **stay-at-home** order that is in place until at least **Thursday, May 20th**. Recent media reports indicate that Ontario's Health Minister, provincial health advisors and local medical health officers all suggest that it is too soon to relax restrictions. It is expected that the stay-at-home order will be extended again to curb a fourth wave.

NFN's Crisis Control Group (CCG) has been meeting weekly since the start of the pandemic. Our CCG plans to re-evaluate our June 14th return to work date on May 31st, once we have more details about the latest provincial measures and restrictions.

Impacts to our Business Operations

- **NFN Offices:** Closed to staff until Monday, June 14th with staff working remotely during this time. Only staff who cannot work from home will be permitted to be on-site to perform their duties. Our offices remain closed to the public until further notice. This is to minimize contact to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within our community in line with enhanced public health measures requiring workplaces to ensure all employees work from home if they can.

Some services are available curbside, and drop boxes are located at the Administration Building main entrance, Finance department, Culture Centre, Health Centre, Education Office & Natural Resources.

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- **NFN Daycares:** The Nipissing Ojibway Daycare and Couchie Memorial Daycare remain open for existing registrants, and where both parents/guardians require childcare due to work obligations.
- **Nbisiing Secondary School:** Virtual classes will continue to be offered until the end of the school year.
- **Shuttle Service (Duchesnay Creek Bridge):** Hours of operation are reduced to 7:00am – 8:00pm during the provincewide stay-at-home order. After-hours service is available for essential trips only and must be pre-arranged by contacting Glenn McLeod at 705-471-7073 during business hours.
- **NFN Businesses (provincial restrictions in effect until May 20th – date subject to change):**
 - *Essential businesses* (providing gas and/or groceries) can continue operating with COVID-19 safety precautions in place. NFN staff are working with businesses to ensure safety measures are current.
 - *Non-essential businesses* can be open between 7:00am and 8:00pm for curbside pick-up or delivery by appointment (deliveries are permitted between 6:00am and 9:00pm). Patrons must pre-order by phone or online before coming to the business (with the exception of convenience stores).

Update on COVID-19 Vaccines

As of May 10th, 1,424 individuals have received a 1st dose of Moderna (90.64% of eligible registrants) and 1,145 individuals have received their 1st & 2nd doses (72.88% of eligible registrants). There are currently 14 individuals on the waitlist for a 1st dose.

NFN Health Services has held 23 vaccination clinics and is planning to hold one final mass immunization clinic before the end of May at Nbisiing Secondary School and the Community Complex Gym in Garden Village before moving to appointment-based bookings at the Health Centre on Wednesday afternoons starting in June.

If you have not yet received a 1st dose and would like to, please call the Health Centre at 705-753-3312 to **register before Friday, May 14, 2021. You must register in advance** and will then be called for a vaccine appointment based on the time at which you registered. If you have received a 1st dose already, you do not need to call again to register for your 2nd dose.

Community members aged 12 to 17 years or those in this age group residing in an NFN household can call the Health Centre at 705-753-3312 to register for a Pfizer vaccine. Individuals are encouraged to not wait as we can only order vaccines for those registered for one. Appointments will be scheduled as soon as provincial approval is granted for this age range.

COVID-19 Immunization Records

If it has been more than 14 days since you had your 2nd dose of the Moderna vaccine here at NFN, your immunization record will be sent to you starting this week. If your preference was to receive the record by secure email, it will be issued to the email address listed on the 2nd dose consent form. All other records will be sent to the mailing address provided on the 2nd dose consent form. If you do not receive your record by May 25th and it has been more than 14 days since your 2nd dose, please contact the Health Centre at 705-753-3312 to follow-up.

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Rapid Testing on NFN

NFN has secured four (4) COVID-19 testing units that will be operated by our trained and qualified nurses. Test results are available in 30 minutes and two (2) tests can be done at a time. Two (2) units will be located at the Lawrence Commanda Health Centre (58 Semo Road, Garden Village) and two (2) will be at Nbisiing Secondary School (469B Couchie Memorial Drive, Duchesnay).

It is important to note that these units serve as a surveillance tool and do not provide a laboratory confirmed result. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 at one of our rapid testing units will be sent for a test at an assessment centre to confirm the result. Individuals who test negative will not need to take further action if there is no concern about possible exposure to COVID-19.

To inquire about getting a rapid test: please call the Health Centre at 705-753-3312.

Assessment Centres

Residents who have symptoms or are concerned about a possible exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 can now call the Health Centre at 705-753-3312 to ask about a rapid test. If the rapid test is positive, you will be advised to get tested at one of the assessment centres. If you have severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, you should call 911 and mention your symptoms.

If you think you may have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, first self-isolate and then use Ontario's Self-Assessment Tool to see if you need to seek further care or contact NFN's Community Health Nurse at 705-840-8830 for more information.

If you get tested for COVID-19, you and everyone else you live with must stay home until you have results. *Do not go to work or school or visit anyone if you have symptoms.*

- **North Bay Regional Health Centre – 50 College Drive, North Bay**
Appointment Required – Call 705-474-8600 ext. 4110 - Open 9am to 5pm (7 days a week)
Assessment Centre is in parking lot #9 for symptomatic patients or children 8 & under
Drive thru options available near Emergency entrance available for asymptomatic people
- **West Nipissing Assessment Centre – 219 O'Hara Street, Sturgeon Falls (Community Complex)**
Appointment Required – Call 705-580-2186 - Open 12pm to 4pm (Monday to Friday)

Contacts

If you are concerned about a potential exposure to COVID-19, please contact our Community Health Nurse, Carole Lafantaisie, at 705-840-8830. Other inquiries may be directed to Kimberly Lalonde, Director of Health Services, at 705-498-3698.

The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit's COVID-19 call centre has a new toll-free phone number ([1-844-478-1400](tel:1-844-478-1400)) for individuals to discuss general or school concerns related to COVID-19.

Please visit nfn.ca/covid19 for regular updates and links to helpful information.