

Kiteley, Alana

From: Kiteley, Alana
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2020 8:00 AM
To: Basaraba, Christi (AADNC/AANDC); Marsh, Griffin (AADNC/AANDC); Amash, Sara (AADNC/AANDC)
Cc: Valois, Jeff; Theis, Rick
Subject: Re: Eabametoong First Nation - Letter

Hi all,

As a follow-up, are you also able to provide the latest on the conversations with the province on field hospital support? Thank you. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/ontario-first-nations-field-hospitals-1.5524150>

The grand chief of an organization that represents 49 First Nations in northwestern Ontario says the province's Ministry of Health is undermining efforts to set up field hospitals for three northern regions of the province.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler said Monday that the momentum to set up field hospitals in Timmins, Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout stalled following a teleconference late last week with provincial officials who resisted the idea.

"Those discussions are now pretty much stalled and not progressing the way we had hoped," said Fiddler.

He said medical resources in northern regions of the province are scarce at the best of times.

"The danger or the risk of the health care system getting overwhelmed is real and we need to put in plans to address that."

Fiddler wrote to Ontario Premier Doug Ford on Friday saying that Indigenous Services Canada, regional hospitals and municipalities all support for the idea of field hospitals that would treat not only First Nations patients, but the regional population.

Alana Kiteley
343-542-6531

On Apr 7, 2020, at 9:59 AM, Kiteley, Alana <Alana.Kiteley@pmo-cpm.gc.ca> wrote:

Thank you.

From: Basaraba, Christi (AADNC/AANDC) <christi.basaraba@canada.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 9:51 AM
To: Kiteley, Alana <Alana.Kiteley@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>; Marsh, Griffin (AADNC/AANDC) <griffin.marsh@canada.ca>; Amash, Sara (AADNC/AANDC) <sara.amash@canada.ca>
Cc: Valois, Jeff <Jeff.Valois@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>; Theis, Rick <Rick.Theis@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Eabametoong First Nation - Letter

Hi Alana-

As Griff mentioned before, despite what the Chief is saying in the media, the community is actually a model example of how to prepare and respond to an outbreak.

Sara and I are working with our comms team for a strategy on this.

C

From: Kiteley, Alana <Alana.Kiteley@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>
Sent: April 7, 2020 9:43 AM
To: Marsh, Griffin (AADNC/AANDC) <griffin.marsh@canada.ca>; Basaraba, Christi (AADNC/AANDC) <christi.basaraba@canada.ca>; Amash, Sara (AADNC/AANDC) <sara.amash@canada.ca>
Cc: Valois, Jeff <Jeff.Valois@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>; Theis, Rick <Rick.Theis@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Eabametoong First Nation - Letter

Thank you Griffin. This is very helpful.

Christi, we connected on ways to get this information out, while first and foremost respecting the community-Minister/ISC relationship. Did anything follow from this? I do think we need to work to get the message out in some way that this is a priority, that we're actively engaged, etc. If we are saying nothing, I think we risk a larger issue of people and other communities thinking we don't take this seriously.

From: Marsh, Griffin (AADNC/AANDC) <griffin.marsh@canada.ca>
Sent: Monday, April 6, 2020 11:00 PM
To: Kiteley, Alana <Alana.Kiteley@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>; Basaraba, Christi (AADNC/AANDC) <christi.basaraba@canada.ca>; Amash, Sara (AADNC/AANDC) <sara.amash@canada.ca>
Cc: Valois, Jeff <Jeff.Valois@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>; Theis, Rick <Rick.Theis@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Eabametoong First Nation - Letter

I'll let Sara and Christi speak on the issues side.

Minister had a quick conversation with the Chief this morning and I followed up with the Chief for about 45 mins. All of the points in the Press Release were raised and have been pushed to the department from multiple levels.

I spoke to the Chief pretty frankly about military hospitals, saying we needed specifics on what we were addressing and we had many tools to address infrastructure needs, staffing needs, or repurposing of spaces, and we and NAN will work on this piece with them moving forward. On the ask, we will manage need across the region and deploy resources or work with DND as necessary. Currently the community has the space and capacity to address, and has led a very strong reaction to the confirmation of a case overall.

The Chief confirmed that there were 38 more test swabs in community and our officials said 100 more were being shipped in today from Sioux Look (unclear if this has made it).

On PPE, here were the numbers confirmed by the Nurses in community last night.

Oxygen: 5 large tanks and 8 small tanks

Oxygen concentrators = 2 high flow

The community has a digital x-ray and it is operational.

NP Swabs 34 (we have 6000 swabs pre-positioned in Sioux Lookout).

Surgical masks 18 boxes = 900 masks

Gowns 150 + 120 = 270

Gloves = 67 boxes

Face shield = 171

N95 = 32 boxes

Nursing Staffing: staffing is at full complement of 5 nurses. We will monitor the workload and request additional staffing as required.

That's the technical update. Sara and Christi can lead on issues or comms.

I will note, the Chief used to be the Grand Chief of NAN and is a smart politician. He has run a very strong response so far I'd say and a lot of this felt like he was going to ask for things he wanted to ask for, and we weren't going to talk him out of it.

Happy to answer any questions!

Griffin

From: Kiteley, Alana <Alana.Kiteley@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>

Sent: Monday, April 6, 2020 8:54 PM

To: Marsh, Griffin (AADNC/AANDC) <griffin.marsh@canada.ca>; Basaraba, Christi (AADNC/AANDC) <christi.basaraba@canada.ca>; Amash, Sara (AADNC/AANDC) <sara.amash@canada.ca>

Cc: Valois, Jeff <Jeff.Valois@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>; Theis, Rick <Rick.Theis@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>

Subject: Eabametoong First Nation - Letter

Hi all,

Apologies for the multiple chains on this one, but bringing a few folks in as well (and please do the same on your side if I'm missing anyone). We saw the letter/public release from Eabametoong this eve. Looking for a better sense from your team on next steps.

Thanks,

--

EABAMETOONG FIRST NATION EXPRESSES GRIEF AND FRUSTRATION AS FIRST COVID-19 CASE IS CONFIRMED IN REMOTE COMMUNITY: Requests Immediate Action and Mobilization of Field Hospital

April 6, 2020

Eabametoong First Nation, ON – The news came in as an abrupt shock to Chief Harvey Yesno and Council members late on Sunday, April 5th. One of the 1600 community members living on reserve in Eabametoong First Nation was confirmed as the first case of COVID-19 in a remote community in Canada.

Eabametoong, also known as Fort Hope, has been investing tremendous energy and community resources over the last few weeks into preventing and preparing for the spread of COVID-19. EFN instituted travel restrictions into the remote community on March 20th, developed a community Pandemic Plan, declared a State of Emergency, and on April 1st further tightened down access with a Community Protection and Emergency Response Order. Now that EFN is working to implement this Order and other precautions, it has been a challenge to ensure these are enforced by local police. **While these measures and plans established by the First Nation are reflective of medical best practices and**

guidance on COVID-19, there has been not been any meaningful plan developed with Federal and Provincial health networks to address the well-known needs of remote communities.

Chief Yesno said, "It is heartbreaking. It is horrific to know your community member is struggling against this virus, and the rest of the community is seriously at risk. We have been working around the clock to prepare... we knew this was possible; you can have the best possible local plan in place, but if your health care partners and Federal and Provincial governments don't come to the table with real funding and real options to respond to this emergency at a broader scale, then you can't implement your plan."

In EFN we are overcrowded in substandard homes, living on a boil water advisory for 6822 days, with a chronic shortage of nurses in our clinic, have a population with many trauma, health and mental health vulnerabilities, including 174 clients on suboxone, over 52 elders, and do not receive enough PPE from the health authority to equip our staff. These are all known health care gaps, and nothing concrete has been done to improve readiness to handle COVID-19, especially the worst-case scenario of a surge in need for ICU-level care in multiple communities in the region.

Despite participating in dozens of conference calls with regional health authorities and Federal and Provincial agencies, advocating for an effective approach to this pandemic, Chief Yesno is frustrated with the pace and limits of bureaucratic management of this crisis. "On March 13th, we issued a press release calling for the highest levels of government to step in. We provided detailed options and identified the extensive needs to be addressed. To date I have not heard or seen any plan to deal with proper medical assessment, isolation, or treatment of multiple cases in EFN or among remote communities. We have been saying that we need to mobilize a Canadian Forces field hospital, but haven't had that level of support or commitment yet."

"Today, as my community is fighting fear and a very real risk of outbreak, I cannot wait for the organizations that typically under-serve EFN to come through in this serious challenge. **We have laid out recommendations and options and been met with commitments to assess or evaluate next steps... that is not adequate when lives are on the line.** Today, we moved beyond planning or working to improve readiness... we are in the thick of it now. **EFN Chief and Council has already begun reaching out to the Ontario Emergency Operating Centre and Canadian Forces. Immediate action and support are needed or lives could be lost."**

EFN requires a field hospital with medical supports to provide in-community isolation and treatment, since there is no adequate infrastructure or housing options for membership to self-isolate. It is expected that the limited ICU capacity of regional health centres like Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay will be over-run in the coming week or two. EFN Chief and Council are not willing to wait around as limited resources are expended and under-resourced nurses at the local clinic are suddenly faced with life and death triage decisions that became all-too-commonplace in Italy in the month of March.

EFN is calling on Provincial and Federal authorities to respond immediately with:

- **New capacity for an army field hospital and care facility to allow 50-100+ community members to be safely isolated when diagnosed, since EFN suffers from chronic housing shortage and overcrowding issues that will enable rapid spread of COVID-19 unless other measures are in place;**
- **Testing kits, qualified personnel to administer them, and training for community staff to begin intensive testing and contact tracing work within the community;**
- **Resourcing to establish a safe testing site and avoid contaminating the Nursing Station;**
- **PPE and supplies for health care staff and local crisis response workers;**
- **Increased local medical HR including nurses, doctors and monitoring options for community members who are not evacuated for critical care;**

- Coordinated, regional support and resourcing for critical care patients who need to be evacuated to Sioux

Lookout, Thunder Bay and elsewhere;

- Emergency assistance with implementing local Pandemic Plan, including appropriate resourcing for vulnerable populations with mental health, addictions, trauma, and multiple existing medical complications; and,

- Emergency support for food, supplies, counselling, communications, energy costs, and meeting household-

level needs as EFN increases community lockdown measures.

“In my opinion, there has already been significant negligence in the lack of response to this pandemic for remote communities. We had a lag of time here in the north to prepare, but not all parties have grasped the urgency of this situation. I expect our regional organizations and all governments to step up. What we need right now is not that complicated, but needs to be mobilized immediately. Underpinning that must be a willingness to listen, commitment to walk together through this crisis, and establish long term solutions to the systemic issues that make our communities far more vulnerable than any other group in Canada.”

Chief Harvey Yesno can be reached at: 1 (807) 624-6427 or harvey.yesno@eabametoongfn.ca

Alana Kiteley

Issues Advisor | Conseillère en enjeux

Office of the Prime Minister