

Update re: COVID-19 with MNC, MMF and MNBC

Thursday, June 4, 2020

2:00-3:00pm

1-877-413-4781 or local 613-960-7510

Conference ID: 9513647

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR PHAC PARTICIPANTS

CONTEXT

- The Métis National Council (MNC), Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) and the Métis Nation-British Columbia (MNBC) will meet with Government of Canada officials via teleconference on June 4, 2020. The last meeting with this group was on May 21, 2020.
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) will share a federal update on COVID-19 and MNC, MMF and MNBC will share an overview of plans and pressures for their respective nations.
- Several Health Portfolio ADMs/VPs have been invited. Confirmed to attend are Kelly Taylor (SPPB), Karen Walton (HSIB) and Tasha Stefanis (HC).

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS FROM MAY 21ST MEETING

There were two follow-up actions under the PHAC section in the May 21st meeting minutes:

- ISC/PHAC to follow-up with MMF on the number of PPE sent to FN's in MB.
- MMF to follow-up with FNIHB-ISC on the type of PPE that is required and for what purposes. FNIHB-ISC to discuss request with PHAC.

On May 31st, a follow-up email was sent from ISC (Pamela Wolfe-Roberge) to all meeting participants on the number of First Nations communities, Metis communities and Inuit communities that received PPE. There were some additional questions from the Metis councils that ISC will follow-up on.

On June 3rd, PHAC-NESS confirmed that they have not received a request for PPE from MMF.

COVID-19 RESPONSE – FEDERAL UPDATE

New funding (as of May 29, 2020)

The Prime Minister announced new funding to provide critical support to Indigenous families and communities during this crisis, based on needs that have been identified. The funding includes:

- \$285.1 million to support the ongoing public health response to COVID-19 in Indigenous communities. The investment will fund community-led responses to the pandemic, and provide targeted increases in primary health care resources for First Nations communities. In case of outbreaks, this funding can be drawn upon to provide surge capacity and additional support for community-based services in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

- \$270 million to supplement the On-Reserve Income Assistance Program to address increased demand on the program, which will help individuals and families meet their essential living expenses. It will also help hire additional staff to better serve First Nations communities and connect individuals to other government programs.
- \$44.8 million over five years to build 12 new shelters, which will help protect and support Indigenous women and girls experiencing and fleeing violence. This funding will help build 10 shelters in First Nations communities on reserve across the country, and two in the territories, to support Indigenous women and children. The government will also provide \$40.8 million to support operational costs for these new shelters over the first five years, and \$10.2 million annually ongoing. Also announcing \$1 million a year ongoing, starting this year, to support engagement with Métis leaders and service providers on shelter provision and community-led violence prevention projects for Métis women, girls, and LGBTQ and two-spirit people.

[New funding \(as of May 21, 2020\)](#)

The Prime Minister announced \$75 million in new funding for Indigenous organizations providing services to Indigenous peoples in urban centres and off reserve. This additional funding will support more community-based projects that address the critical needs of Indigenous populations during this crisis, including food security, mental health support services, and sanitation and protective equipment. It could also help with other needs, such as support for Elders, transportation, and educational materials for Indigenous children and youth.

[Funding \(see Annex A for details\)](#)

- Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan includes \$305 million for a new, distinctions-based Indigenous Community Support Fund, of which \$30 million has been allocated to the Métis Nation. Funding is to be distributed through ISC's existing mechanisms to facilitate the speed at which funding can be received. The funds could be used for measures including, but not limited to:
 - support for Elders and vulnerable community members
 - measures to address food insecurity
 - educational and other support for children
 - mental health assistance and emergency response services
 - preparedness measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- PHAC does not have role in distributing funding to the Métis Nation in response to COVID-19.

[Point of care testing \(IDPC\)](#)

- The Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Lab (NML) in Winnipeg is performing diagnostic testing for the virus that causes COVID-19.
- The NML is working in close collaboration with provincial and territorial public health laboratories to ensure that persons under investigation for the novel coronavirus are confirmed or ruled out through laboratory testing.
- Multiple provincial public health laboratories can now test for the novel coronavirus with a very high degree of accuracy.

- BC, AB, SK, ON, QC are able to confirm laboratory diagnostics for the virus that causes COVID-19. For all other provinces, their results undergo additional testing at NML because this is a previously unknown virus and it is good practice to use additional tests to provide further confirmation of initial laboratory findings.
- Presumptive positive cases that are identified through provincial/territorial testing are managed from a public health and infection control perspective in the same manner as confirmed cases.
- Provinces and territories are using the testing approach developed and validated by the NML.
- Furthermore, provincial lab results undergo quality assurance testing at the NML.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (HSIB)

- The Government of Canada is coordinating with provincial and territorial governments to quickly assess and respond to the need for PPE items such as N95 respirators, surgical masks, face shields, nitrile gloves, gowns and other protective clothing, as well as medical supplies such as sanitizer, ventilators, swabs and testing kits.
- PPE and medical supplies are distributed to the provinces and territories according to an allocation framework agreed upon by federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) Ministers of Health. The allocation framework ensures that Indigenous communities, including the Métis Nation are not excluded from supplies distributed through provinces. (Note: HSIB indicated that the allocation framework is not available to share).

Mental Health Supports (PHAC/HPCPD/ISC)

- During these difficult times, it is critical that Canadians have access to effective tools to support their mental health and wellbeing, obtain credible and reliable information about mental health and substance use, and access services.
- The Government of Canada has launched the *Wellness Together Canada* mental health and substance use support portal. It is a central resource for accessing confidential mental health and substance use support with respect to COVID-19. This web-based portal provides Canadians with a virtual network of psycho-social information services and supports, and is available on Canada.ca/coronavirus and the Canada COVID-19 app. The Wellness Together Canada mental health and substance use support portal is meant to support existing provincial and territorial services.
- Additionally, ISC maintains the Hope for Wellness Help Line, which offers immediate help to all Indigenous peoples across Canada, including Métis citizens. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to offer counselling and crisis intervention.