

# An Update from the First Nations Health Council



May 2020 | Issue 3

*This is the third issue of the FNHC's weekly bulletin, designed to provide BC First Nation Chiefs and leaders with a round-up of news and updates on the COVID-19 pandemic response. For the most current public health guidelines as well as information for individuals and communities, visit [FNHA.ca/coronavirus](https://fnha.ca/coronavirus).*

*Please send comments on what you would like to see in future issues to: [sharedsecretariat@fnha.ca](mailto:sharedsecretariat@fnha.ca)*

## Business Resumption Planning

Over the past months, the First Nation's Health Council's main focus has been on supporting community leadership during the outbreak. Planning for the recovery phases from COVID-19 are going forward as well, including coordination and planning with federal and provincial partners.

The FNHC is hearing questions from Chiefs and leaders about Indigenous business resumption in line with BC's Restart Plan. The FNHA is developing public health guidelines related to the resumption of activities in First Nations communities. Work Safe BC maintains overall responsibility for this effort, with FNHA providing support based on the unique needs of First Nations communities.

Please continue to bring any COVID-19 related concerns you may have to the attention of your regional FNHC representative. They are a source of information and support during this crisis. The FNHC will continue to advocate for practical, community and Nation-based solutions with Canada and BC, and through our regional partnership tables.

## Chiefs 'Town Hall' Highlights

On May 21, the FNHC hosted an all Chiefs and leaders Town Hall information session. The session featured FNHA senior leadership and Emergency Management British Columbia representatives.

Highlights included:

- Zero positive COVID-19 cases in First Nations since May 10.
- FNHA determining placement of two "gene expert" table-top testing devices.
- FNHA continues to secure PPE for healthcare professionals and community supplies for added support.

These calls will be held bi-weekly for the foreseeable future to update on FNHA and partner agency activities related to COVID-19. Each call will feature a question and answer session to enable participants to ask about issues in real-time.

**The next Town Hall information session is on  
Thursday, June 4th from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM**

## Leadership Collaboration

FNHC and FNLC continue regular, bi-weekly calls with provincial government agencies. The calls provide an opportunity for advocacy on Indigenous issues during the COVID-19 response and recovery.

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## Engagement Planning

The Health Council has been discussing how to restart its advocacy work once the pandemic recovery phases are in effect; this includes looking at options and timing for virtual engagement across BC and within each Region. The Health Council will meet virtually in June to discuss options for the fall and beyond.

Based on information about the risks posed to communities and feedback from leadership, the FNHC will recommend the best path forward to continue crucial engagement work within each Region. Details will be provided in future FNHC Bulletins.

## Counselling Supports for Chiefs and Leaders

The Kackaamin Family Development Centre and Tsow-Tun-Le-Lum Treatment Centre (TTLL) are offering direct counseling and cultural support. Call toll-free 1-888-403-3123 for an initial consultation.

**Hours for initial consultation/session are:**  
**MONDAY TO FRIDAY ..... 8am – 8pm**  
**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY ..... 10am - 2pm**

## Rural and Remote Framework

FNHA continues to participate in the provincial working group with leadership from both FNHA central and regional offices in attendance. The work is a process of continuous improvement and development in support of communities. Many regions have submitted their Rural and Remote Framework plans to the Ministry of Health and we commend them for their leadership.

## Question of the Week

*Support for local state of emergency operation centres (EOCs) is dependent on a provincial state of emergency declaration. How will supports be provided if the province declares the state of emergency over?*

The government of BC is supporting EOCs as we work through various states of emergency. There is no indication from BC or the Public Health Officer that we will evolve out of provincial state of emergency in the near future. A review of the legislation known as the Emergency Program Act speaks to an EOC for a health emergency only when there is a state of provincial emergency set up. A Review of the Emergency Program Act is forthcoming.

Today, May 22, FNHC Chair Charlene Belleau joined FNHA's Richard Jock and Shannon McDonald in a presentation to the federal Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. The Committee heard testimony on the government's response to COVID-19. Details will be shared in next week's bulletin.

