



Indigenous Services Canada, Alberta Region  
Suite 730, 9700 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4C3

April 13, 2021

Rene Houle, Director of Emergency Management  
Whitefish Lake (Goodfish) First Nation #128  
Box 272 Goodfish Lake, AB T0A 1R0

Dear Mr. Houle,

I am writing to provide an update on the status of the COVID-19 B.1.1.7 variant of concern currently on the rise across Alberta. As of April 12, 2021, variants of concern represent approximately 51% of all active COVID-19 cases in Alberta. While multiple variants of concern have been identified in the province, the B.1.1.7. variant, originally identified in the United Kingdom, is the predominant variant strain at this time. Although symptoms of the B.1.1.7. variant are the same as the original COVID-19 virus, current evidence suggests it is more contagious and spreads much more quickly within households. This is especially a concern for households with a high number of members. It is important that your Nation's membership continue to follow all current public health measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. We ask that all members wear a mask in public, practice good hand hygiene and physical distancing, limit non-essential travel, monitor for symptoms and limit the number of contacts to immediate household members only.

Please note that the Indigenous Services Canada Alberta Region (ISC-AB) Medical Officers of Health (MOH) and Communicable Disease Control (CDC) teams continue to work closely with Alberta First Nations and community health staff to support extensive public health response efforts. Should a case of COVID-19 or a variant of concern be confirmed on-reserve, our regional team will immediately initiate a public health investigation inclusive of contact tracing, testing of close contacts and case management. The ISC-AB MOH team continues to review and adapt protocols as we learn more about managing the variant cases and their contacts. Currently, if an individual has tested positive for a variant strain, they are legally required to isolate for 10 days. Following the initial 10 day isolation periods, all close contacts of the individual (i.e. household members) must isolate for 14 days as they are considered recent exposures for the entirety of the initial 10-day isolation period. Additionally, all contacts of cases will be offered testing upon initial contact notification and 10 days after exposure.

In alignment with recent direction provided by Alberta Chief Medical of Health Dr. Deena Hinshaw, it is strongly recommended that, when possible, isolation of a variant of concern case take place outside of the household. I recognize that self-isolation measures can present challenges and can also result in stigma and unnecessary speculation. I want to highlight that it is important to respect the privacy and dignity of individuals who are required to self-isolate. Understanding this isolation-period can cause hardship for impacted households, there are options available to support individuals to quarantine outside of their impacted household in an isolation facility. Of note, the isolation of variant of concern cases outside of the immediate household has been shown to reduce the quarantine period for uninfected individuals, lessening the overall impact. ISC-AB is available support your Nation in accessing these alternate isolation resources should they be of interest to your membership.

The ISC-AB MOH and Communicable Disease Control teams remain committed to supporting your Nation's health team with the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine. As of end of day April 9, 2021, our records show over 344 vaccine doses have been administered in Whitefish Lake First Nation #128. Immunization is one of the most important measures that can be taken to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Whitefish Lake First Nation #128 over the long term and for the protection of the most vulnerable members of the community. Once 80% of adults in community receive the vaccine, there is a much better chance of limiting widespread outbreaks of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be an active and evolving situation in Alberta and as such **adherence to public health measures continues to be essential at this time**. Should community members require COVID-19 testing or have any questions they are encouraged to contact the Goodfish Lake Health Centre at 780-636-3638.

The health and safety of your Nation's membership remains our priority. Thank you for your continued partnership and support as we work together during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

*Parminder Thiara*

Dr. Parminder Thiara  
Regional Director, Primary and Population, Medical Officer of Health  
ISC, FNIHB Alberta Region

Cc: Rhonda Laboucan, Regional Executive Officer, FNIHB-AB  
Dr. Wadieh Yacoub, Senior Medical Officer of Health, FNIHB-AB  
Dr. Chris Sarin, Deputy Medical Officer of Health, FNIHB-AB