



SHIUX LOOKOUT FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Sioux Lookout Area Chiefs and Health Directors

From: Dr. John Guilfoyle, Public Health Physician, SLFNHA

Date: July 10, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Situation Update

I am writing to provide you with an update on the COVID-19 situation in our region.

Case and contact tracing in our communities

No new cases in our communities for 14 days

Contact tracing and follow up is complete in Eabamatoong First Nation and Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation are complete. No further cases.

The recent case in Sachigo Lake First Nation has resolved. Contact tracing and follow up is complete.

All cases are now resolved, with no illness and only one incident of in-community transmission.

The case in a construction worker in Pikangkum First Nation is out of the community, contact tracing and follow up was handed over to the North Western Health Unit (NWHU).

All cases, except for one, have had no symptoms

Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre (SLMHC)

The contact tracing and follow up of the six asymptomatic cases in staff at SLMHC has been completed. In addition, there was widespread surveillance of the hospital staff and patients, no new cases detected or evidence of spread from the six cases. Further study of this incident is planned to see if we can solve the puzzle that this incident continues to pose. This will be led by Dr Schreiber, infectious disease specialist, with help from SLFNHA and NWHU.

Travel restrictions

Caution is still needed when traveling to and from the communities. Physical distancing needs to be followed. Face coverings are recommended where this is not possible. Communities continue to require isolation on return. The implication of this community directed policy is that all community members returning from areas with COVID-19 activity are regarded as positive, regardless of test results etc. Fourteen days continues to the recommended length from entry into the community. This is a very cautious and conservative policy and is designed to minimize the likelihood of the virus being brought back to the community. As a consequence, **testing is not required prior to return to the communities.** It may be done as part of surveillance or at the patient's request but there is no requirement to wait for a result prior to return home. Of course, it must be emphasized that those with symptoms or close contacts to a case should self-isolate and avoid travel until they have been assessed.

Surveillance

Testing people without symptoms/close contact with a case gives us information that is used to answer certain questions. This is called surveillance, it was used widely in Sioux Lookout in the investigation of the recent incident. Hospital staff, hostel staff, patients in the hospital, patients coming from the communities were offered testing. This surveillance will continue but not as widely and will continue to be used to monitor the situation. Further guidance on surveillance testing is available in our document “Sioux Lookout First Nations COVID-19 Testing Strategy, updated June 02, 2020.

Influenza Immunizations

In anticipation of the upcoming flu season, we will be recommending immunization as soon as it is available. This should help reduce the numbers with respiratory symptoms and make it easier to manage COVID -19.

If you have any questions about how to best protect the health of your community, please do not hesitate to contact the following:

Emily Paterson, Director of Approaches to Community Wellbeing
(emily.paterson@slfnha.com)

Dr. Terri Farrell, Medical Director (Terri.Farrell@slfnha.com)

Dr. John Guilfoyle, SLFNHA Public Health Physician (John.Guilfoyle@slfnha.com).

cc. James Morris, Executive Director, SLFNHA
SLFNHA Board of Directors
SLFNHA Chiefs Committee on Health
Community Health Directors and Physicians
Sioux Lookout area Tribal Councils
Nishnawbe Aski Nation