



The FNHA/FNHC/FNHDA Urge Nations to Protect Each Other by Cancelling or Postponing Gatherings and Ceremonies

September 11, 2020

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), the First Nations Health Council (FNHC) and the First Nations Health Directors Association (FNHDA) wish to remind communities that they can help stop the spread of COVID-19 by cancelling or postponing large community gatherings including funerals, or alternatively finding innovative ways to gather either virtually or ensuring that attendees are able to stay two meters apart at all times.

Recent outbreaks and clusters that have occurred in some communities serve as a reminder to all of us of the ongoing risks to our communities as a result of such gatherings.

We do not make these recommendations lightly and acknowledge and understand the significance of cultural gatherings for First Nations communities, and the sacrifices this entails. From a public health standpoint, it is now important to communicate and understand the inherent risks to large gatherings.

The Public Health orders from Dr. Bonnie Henry, our Provincial Health Officer (PHO) regarding gatherings, continue to apply to all gatherings, including funerals and memorials.

We are all living through a unique and difficult time, and it is important to adapt to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to protect the vulnerable among us such as Elders, and those who are already unwell or vulnerable.

As fall approaches, we would also like to remind everyone to continue to practice the public health measures including washing hands, maintaining physical distance by keeping two meters apart from each other, wearing masks where that is not possible and where mandated, and above all to be kind, be calm and stay safe.



This is increasingly important in preparing for the influenza season ahead that may put more of us at risk. Now is the time for all of us to regroup and refocus our efforts to keep the number of new cases low and slow.

Please visit these links to learn about mental health and wellness and supports available to you and your loved ones:

- The First Nations Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service:
<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/ehealth/virtual-substance-use-and-psychiatry-service>
- (fact sheet) Mental Health and Cultural Supports Available During COVID-19:
<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-COVID-19-Mental-Health-and-Cultural-Supports.pdf>
- (fact sheet) Mental Health and Wellness Resources for Youth:
<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Mental-Health-and-Wellness-Resources-for-Youth.pdf>