



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness



January 13, 2021

We are deeply saddened by the racist commentary which has arisen within the community in response to the hardship being experienced by Cowichan Tribes. The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and Island Health strongly condemn these inappropriate actions. We commit to ensuring this racism has no place in our support for Cowichan Tribes.

We would also like to raise our hands in gratitude to the many community and health care leaders in the Cowichan Valley who stood up and called out this unacceptable intolerance. We must continue to stand together in our refusal to allow racism in all its forms.

This is a very difficult time for Cowichan Tribe members, their families and friends. Island Health, Cowichan Tribes and the First Nations Health Authority are continuing to work in partnership to ensure a culturally safe response and approach to managing COVID-19 cases in the community. They can be assured Island Health is committed to listening and understanding how we can best support the response guided by Cowichan Tribes and the FNHA.

Cowichan Tribes and Island Health nurses continue to actively work to identify close contacts of confirmed cases. Any symptomatic close contacts are being tested to identify new cases as quickly as possible in our collective and continued support of the health and wellness of the residents of the community.

The Medical Health Officer, Public Health, Cowichan Tribes and the FNHA are working collaboratively to ensure there are appropriate resources and staff to support testing, case follow up, supports for successful isolation, and cultural supports.

This work includes reinforcing the public health measures and layers of defense we know can be effective in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19. These are responses that have been successful in managing other similar community clusters and they are the interventions we must continue to diligently implement.

- Stay home if you are sick and seek testing
- Wash your hands frequently
- Wear a mask in all indoor public spaces
- Significantly reduce your contacts
- Do not socialize outside of your household
- Do not hold or attend events or gatherings

Island Health has secured 600 doses of Pfizer vaccine for Cowichan Tribes members who are most at risk from COVID-19, those aged 60 and older, and immunizations will begin today.

However, we know vaccine is not an immediate remedy and a couple of weeks are required for protection to develop. That is why the most critical steps we can take right now are the ones proven to make an immediate difference in slowing the transmission of COVID-19. As Dr. Henry has said, we will need to observe these public health measures until a sufficient level of immunization is achieved throughout the province.



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COVID-19 knows no boundaries and now, more than ever, we need to be kind to each other and support each other. We will get through this, together.

In Wellness,

Richard Jock
Chief Executive Officer
First Nations Health Authority

Kathy MacNeil
President & Chief Executive Officer
Island Health