



IMPORTANT NOTICE

Date: February 16, 2021

From: COVID-19 Task Team and HFN Council

Re: Provincial and Community Re-Opening – Update #17

Aaniin Hiawatha Citizens, HFN Residents and OSM Residents,

Last week Ontario announced plans to re-open the Province under the various COVID-19 Response Framework (colour coded zones). Peterborough Public Health (PPH) re-opens today under the Yellow – Protect Zone, with strengthened measures to limit further transmission.

ONTARIO:

Regions are now being phased back into the framework based on improvements in:

- COVID-19 transmission
- Health system capacity
- Public health system capacity
- Local context and conditions
- Testing capacity

After returning to the framework, public health regions will stay in their level for at least two weeks. The government will then assess the impact of public health and workplace safety measures to determine if the region should stay where they are or be moved to a different level.

There are several risk factors that help drive transmission of COVID-19, including:

- close contact
- closed spaces
- crowded places
- forceful exhalation

We know that close contact is the highest risk and limiting these risks is critical to keeping Ontario open and safe.

Personal and public health measures — such as physical distancing, staying home when ill even with mild symptoms, frequent handwashing and surface cleaning — have significant benefits and have been proven to limit COVID-19 transmission.

It is critical the people of Ontario understand the risks of gatherings (crowds) in close contact in enclosed and indoor spaces to understand how to mitigate those risks and make responsible choices.

For more information on Ontario's Stage 3 Re-opening Response Framework please visit: [O. Reg. 364/20: RULES FOR AREAS IN STAGE 3 \(ontario.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/regulation/2020/03/364)

HIAWATHA FIRST NATION:

As you are aware, COVID-19 Variants of Concern (VOCs) are circulating within Ontario, and at least one of these variants, B.1.1.7 (the "UK variant") is thought to be 30-50% more transmissible than those already established in Canada. There is some evidence that it can cause more severe illness, resulting in more hospitalizations and deaths.

This variant can spread very quickly from people who do not know they have it (asymptomatic people) and can cause a rapid increase in cases in a short period of time.

Given the evolving situation with COVID-19 and the variants, and should we have a confirmed case of the one of the variants - we will immediately:

1. Lockdown the Community and put a Stay-at-Home order in place. A Stay-at-Home order will be at least 14 days, or longer depending on the variant's spread in our Community.
2. Closure of all non-essential Businesses, Offices, Childcare Centre, Gym, Youth Centre will take place.

In response to Ontario's Response Framework, Peterborough Public Health being placed in the Yellow Zone, and the variants that are now circulating in the province, Hiawatha First Nation will use a Yellow/Orange Zone approach to re-opening.

Hiawatha First Nation (HFN) guidelines include:

- Limit close contact to your household and stay at least 2 metres (6ft) apart from everyone else, wear a mask if 2 metres (6ft) of distance cannot be achieved
- If you live alone, you can have close contact with only one other household.
- HFN public areas (PowWow Grounds, Ball Diamond, Boat Launch, Beach area, Lake View areas) will remain closed to the public
- Unorganized indoor gatherings are not permitted
- Unorganized outdoor gatherings are limited to 25 people and masks must be worn if 2 metres (6ft) of distance cannot be achieved
- Organized public events and gatherings are not permitted without prior approval of HFN COVID-19 Task Team and Council

- Community Surveillance will continue until further notice and will be asking for proof of residency
- Home builds/renovations may occur - ensure masks are worn by yourself and the repair person) and physical distancing of 2 metres (6ft)
- ORRS will remain open with continued safety measures/precautions in place
- HFN Gym remains open, following the existing restrictions and safety measure/precautions in place
- Child Care Centre remains open under the current strict regulations

We continue to ask Citizens who live in Red and Grey Zone areas to only come for essential services, such as gas, or to drop off essential items to family members. Please limit your stay and follow the health and safety guidelines in place.

UPDATES:

ORRS:

Open from 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. to the public from the Green, Yellow and Orange Zones. People who live in the Red and Grey Zones will not be permitted entry/service. An updated safety plan has been submitted to the HFN COVID-19 Task Team and put into place.

Citizen Owned Businesses:

Open for their regular hours of operation to the public from the Green, Yellow and Orange Zones. People who live in the Red and Grey Zones will not be permitted entry/service. An updated safety plan has been submitted to the HFN COVID-19 Task Team and put into place.

Administration and Health Offices:

Offices will be open starting the week of February 22, 2021. Staff in the offices will return on a weekly rotating basis. Appointments will be required to meet with Staff. You can call 705-295-4421 to book an appointment with the Staff person you need to meet.

Youth Centre and Programing:

The Youth Centre will re-open and Programming will resume in March. Further detailed information will be provided in the March 2021 Newsletter.

In starting our re-opening, it is vital that we continue to follow all health and safety guidelines put into place – we must each take responsibility to keep our Citizens and Community safe.

COVID-19 VACCINE:

The COVID-19 vaccines which have been approved are now being used in Canada. First Nations LTC homes and Health Workers have been included in the initial Phase I.

The number of vaccines in Canada still remains limited, however it is the hope to have all First Nations vaccinated by March/April 2021.

COVID-19 Vaccine Survey:

We sent out a survey in regards to interest in receiving the vaccine and we thank those who completed the survey.

If you have not completed your survey and would like to receive the vaccine once it is available, please contact Donna Paudash at 705-295-4421 to receive a paper copy or visit our website at www.hiawathafirstnation.com to complete a survey. Please have these completed by Monday, February 22, 2021.

We continue to work with PPH to develop a plan for our Community's vaccination roll-out and we will keep you updated as this roll-out progresses.

Our COVID-19 Task Team continues to monitor the situation and meet regularly. Up to date information can be found on our website:

<https://www.hiawathafirstnation.com/covid-19-updates/>

In closing, we would like to acknowledge that we understand this has been an incredibly difficult time for everyone. We thank you for all your efforts to keep your loved ones and our Community safe and healthy.

We ask that you continue to be safe wherever you go, as we are all vulnerable to this virus. Our life is sacred, as was our Ancestors and our Seven Generations to come. To preserve our sacredness together, we must remain apart a little bit longer to protect our loved ones, our Elders, our Knowledge Keepers, our Children and all our Citizens. We continue to ask that everyone follow the measures in place just a little while longer.

We also wish to express our gratitude to all of you, as we continue to have no confirmed cases to date. This is an achievement which speaks to the dedication and care each of us has exhibited to keep everyone safe. We thank you for all your efforts and we are here for you in the struggles of isolation, missing contact with loved ones and any issue you may be encountering - please reach out if you are in need of help.

“Our Citizens and Community remain our first priority and we will work to mitigate risks for best possible outcomes moving forward through the COVID-19 pandemic.”