

English River First Nation Calls for Increased Focus on the Emerging COVID-19 Crisis in Saskatchewan's Far North

English River First Nation is making an urgent call for support to help control and eradicate the current spread of the virus in their communities.

“As case numbers rapidly increase in the Far North, we hope the Saskatchewan Government is laser-focused on the need to help us stem the spread up here,” says ERFN Councillor Katrina Maurice.

First Nations communities are particularly vulnerable to the spread and impact of viruses because of systemic issues around overcrowding, food insecurity, and underfunded and inferior healthcare systems.

The first four cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in English River First Nation territory this week.

Timeline:

March 11, 2020 – WHO characterizes COVID-19 as a pandemic

March 18 – Saskatchewan declares State of Emergency

March 19 – ERFN declares State of Emergency

April 18 - Health officers advise against travel to and from northern Alberta

April 20 – First Positive Cases of COVID-19 Confirmed in ERFN

April 23 – Premier Scott Moe unveils Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan

April 24 - Province Announces Action to Control The Spread Of COVID-19 In The North

May 4, 2020 – First Phase of Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan set to initiate

“As Saskatchewan descends their curve, we are just starting our ascent,” says ERFN Pandemic Planning Committee Emergency Coordinator Bernie Eaglechild. “As we have witnessed around the world, the shape of each curve was determined by the population’s resources and how quickly they were executed, so we are welcoming any and all of the support we can get to determine the extent of the spread in our communities.”

Local public health officials have already traced the contacts of the recently confirmed cases but recognize the process is not foolproof and there very well may be more cases in the community.

Yesterday, [the province announced actions](#) to support the emergency efforts of the ERFN Pandemic Planning Committee that had been underway since March 18.

“That support would have gone a long way in helping to keep the virus out of our communities. Now, we all need to come together and do everything we can to help the infected heal and stop the virus from spreading any further. We all have a role in that,” says Councillor Maurice.

The community is encouraged to visit [erfn.net](#) where they can find the latest statistics on the number of cases as well as important health and safety information and updates.

Much of the same content will also be shared on the Facebook page [English River First Nation Covid-19 Updates](#).

The communications channels were launched this week as part of the ERFN Pandemic Planning Committees’ ramped-up COVID-19 response efforts.

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