



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

July 24, 2020

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Community Outbreak Declared on Haida Gwaii

Declaration made as a proactive measure to prevent further spread of COVID-19 in communities.

FNHA has learned that there are 13 confirmed cases of COVID-19 on Haida Gwaii. All are local residents, with 12 active cases, and one recovered.

The initial sources of transmission are still being investigated, but it is believed that all cases are either residents who had recently traveled off-island, or had exposure to other residents who had recently traveled off-island. All active cases are self-isolating at home, with clear processes in place for identifying and informing close contacts. There is no evidence at this time of wider community transmission of COVID-19 on Haida Gwaii.

Currently, there are no impacts on acute care services at hospitals on Haida Gwaii. The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and Northern Health (NH) will work with the Council of Haida Nations and municipal governments to coordinate community responses and medical supports.

“Our FNHA resources are supporting regional operations and the communities, and are on standby to provide support and resources as the circumstances unfold,” says Richard Jock, FNHA Interim CEO.

FNHA’s Acting Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Nel Wieman, emphasizes the need for people to be calm as she shares, “I think it’s important to remind people that the intention of declaring an outbreak is not to increase anxiety or panic; what it allows is an increased response of human, financial and service resources to help the communities flatten the curve of infections/new cases within Haida Gwaii communities. At this time, we would like to remind community members to practice lateral kindness – there are some community members who are ill at home – let’s provide them with a circle of care & support. It is important for members of Haida Gwaii Nation to remain calm in the midst of this outbreak.”

People in their communities can work together to decrease the stigma that may exist about COVID-19:



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- Let's not blame and shame people who may be sick with COVID
- Let's not do anything that would make it difficult for people with possible symptoms/infection to come forward to be tested
- Those who have any symptoms suggestive of COVID infection need to go through the pathways to get tested as soon as possible

"It is important to acknowledge the collaborative nature of the response – there are a lot of really incredible people coming together and bringing their best to support Haida Gwaii; ensuring that people are getting the care they need. FNHA is here to support the good work that the Haida Nation has been leading and to hold up the good work being done by the frontline workers both in community and with Northern Health," shares Nicole Cross, FNHA's Regional Executive Director for the North.

Close contacts of any confirmed cases will be informed by public health officials, and supported in actions they should take, such as self-monitoring or self-isolating. It is very important that if you are experiencing potential COVID-19 symptoms that you self-isolate, and contact your health care provider or the NH COVID-19 Online Clinic & Info Line (1-844-645-7811). Everyone can do their part to protect themselves, family and community members in Haida Gwaii.

Be Safe:

- Stay home and get tested if you are sick.
- Maintain physical distancing of greater than two metres.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wear a mask when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

For information and resources about COVID-19, visit www.fnha.ca/coronavirus