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DENE THA' FIRST NATION EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

COVID-19 crisis continues to rise in Canada and the public health authorities are urging Canadians to strengthen **social distancing** measures and to avoid going out for non-essential reasons.

Dene Tha' First Nation Chief & Council and Management met daily from March 16 to 20, and 23rd, 2020 to discuss and develop a response plan for the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and its potential impacts to the communities of Chateh, Meander & Bushe River, and the citizens (membership) of the Dene Tha' First Nation.

The Chief & Council have a responsibility to take public Health measures to ensure the health and safety of their community members. It has been proven that preventative measures can slow the spread of pandemic disease. It is important for everyone to take the dangers of the virus outbreak very seriously.

Therefore, the Dene Tha' First Nation have by way of a Nation Council resolution passed the following directives and they are effective for the citizens (members) of DTFN immediately:

- **Travel Outside of the northwestern Alberta:** The Dene Tha' travel advisory is to reduce the chances of COVID-19 to enter our communities – Nation members or residents are to limit all travel outside the northwestern region and if one does, they are to self-isolate at home for 10 days. If symptoms arise to contact their healthcare provider at once (developing a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing).
- **Travel Outside of Canada:** As per the travel advisory announced from the Government of Canada, individuals returning to Canada from abroad are required to self-isolate for 14 days. If symptoms arise to contact their healthcare provider at once (developing a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing).
- **Dene Tha' First Nation Travel:** All business travel for Chief & Council, and staff are cancelled.
- **Band Office:** Effective from March 20, 2020, the DTFN Offices will close to the public until April 30, 2020. This is so that the Nation Staff can work without interference on the emergency management and implementation of the plan. Those that have health conditions will not experience financial hardship during this new arrangement. The Management may decide for staff to work from home on a case by case basis. The Chief and Council will be working from home during this time period.
- **DTFN Programs:** Due to the ongoing concerns regarding the COVID-19 virus, DTFN will close their public facilities and cease programming and gatherings until further notice. DTFN will follow and will only continue to provide essential services. All other

programs and services will be suspended until April 30, 2020 and then will be evaluated at that time.

- **Schools:** Closures started on March 16, 2020; the Government of Alberta closed all schools for the rest of the school year. The Chief & Council supports the closure of the Schools in Chateh and Meander. Dene Tha' Community School may develop some course arrangements where possible as well the FVSD is doing the same for the Upper Hay River School.
- **Daycares:** The Daycare Centres are closed until further notice. The decision to close Daycare centres is to protect children same as the school closures.
- **Community Gatherings:** DTFN supports the advisory of the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada to suspend all community gatherings. Therefore, the Community Meetings, and Council meetings are cancelled to April 30, 2020. The next meeting is scheduled tentatively for May 7, 2020 pending the status of the virus advisory. Regarding funerals please see the amendment to funerals included in the Nations Emergency Management Plan.
- **Bingos and Card Games:** All public, or home-based Bingos and Card Games are not allowed to prevent the spread of COVID 19 sickness from person to person, home to home in the communities. Families in over-crowded homes are extremely vulnerable.
- **Emergency Operations Centre Activated:** The Dene Tha' First Nation Emergency Management Operations center, led by the Director of Emergency Management for DTFN was activated {March 20, 2020}. That center is designed to coordinate the DTFN's response between all communities and departments. The purpose of the having Director of Emergency Management is to focus the work through the Coordination Centre to response to COVID 19 health crisis, and logistical requirements for emergency operations.
- **Governance Team:** Major decisions are vetted by Chief & Council, including communications & meetings with the Government of Canada, Government of Alberta, and other Treaty 8 First Nations on regional cooperation. Regional cooperation may include Hospitals, Emergency Medical Services, Testing Centre, Over-flow Centre for medical treatment if the need arises, Medical Transportation (medivac), and other interagency works.
- **Government of Canada:** Announcements of COVID-19 benefits program. DTFN will be engaging with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to determine eligibility criteria. The announcements made are new and it will take some time to learn how the program rollout will be managed by the regional office. Updates will be given once we learn about the program.
- **Essential Supplies:** As part of DTFN's emergency preparedness our administration will be working with area stores to ensure adequate supplies are available for Chateh, Meander River and Bushe River. More details will be forthcoming in the next days to establish protocol and logistics for emergency supplies for families that become affected by the virus and are isolated or quarantined to prevent the virus from spreading in the respective communities.

- **Water Supply for Residents using Water Cisterns (option):** Chateh and Meander has new water treatment plants and will prepare access to have alternate means to refill water jugs for community members during the COVID 19 health crisis. Sanitization & rinse will be available on site; replacement caps were ordered. When this option is available; notification to the community will be made.
- **Community Monitoring (Check Points):** The intent is to keep non-residents from coming into our communities. Only essential services workers are allowed in and they must follow Alberta Health Services COVID safety protocol.

Canada's Health Minister Patty Hajdu encourages, Canadians should be gathering food and medication in their homes. It is recommended to have at least two weeks supply of food, water, as well as medical supplies and refill your prescription drugs.

Sensible Ways to Protect Yourself

The best way to protect yourself against any kind of virus is to practice basic hygiene. This includes washing your hands, not touching your face, coughing and sneezing into your sleeves and avoiding close contact with people who are sick. Follow Health Canada and Alberta Health Services guidelines in making and keeping your homes as safe as possible for your families.

Experts also recommend immediately throwing out used tissues and regularly cleaning surfaces like toilets, doorknobs, handrails, smartphones, and wipe down the cab of your car. Practice **social distancing** (keep 6 feet or 2 meters apart).

Most importantly, people are encouraged not to stress or create rumors.

As new information is announced from the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta, and/or the Assembly of First Nations, new information will be shared by DTFN C&C and/or Administration). All other information, not confirmed by DTFN, is rumor and should not be listened to.

As per DTFN Council Resolution #2019-2020-0051