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September 9, 2020

To Members of Dene Tha' First Nation

Hello fellow Dene Tha' members, I am writing this letter of information on behalf of the Council and our Emergency Management Team to provide information on the recent positive case of COVID-19 confirmed in Bushe River. The Indigenous Services Canada, Alberta Region (ISC-AB) Medical Officers of Health team has been working closely with our Dene Tha' health staff, leadership, emergency management team and NPTC health services to ensure all of our continued health and safety. We know that a lot of hard work has gone in to preparing for this situation.

Currently one individual has tested positive in Bushe River and an active public health investigation is underway. Anyone who has been in contact with this individual is being notified and assessed for symptoms. Anyone required to isolate will be supported by health centre staff. The current priorities of our investigation are identification of any and all contacts, supporting their isolation needs, and testing them for evidence of active COVID 19 disease.

ISC-AB health staff are working closely with the Dene Tha' health team to monitor the identified contacts and support anyone that has been impacted. At this time, the initial investigation has determined that a small number of individuals have been exposed. Risk to the community at large is considered low. We want to thank those that are currently impacted by this situation for isolating and make them aware that our thoughts and best wishes are with them. We know that these self-isolation measures can present challenges and also can result in stigma and unnecessary speculation. We want to highlight that it is important to respect the privacy and dignity of individuals who are required to self-isolate.

During this time of high concern, it is important to seek information from reliable sources. Please be aware that Mackenzie County continues to be a 'watch area' for COVID 19. In addition, there are active COVID 19 cases in nearby First Nations. The Dene Tha' health team will be updating the Chief and Council regularly on the situation. Individuals with health concerns should contact the North Peace Tribal Council Health Services, their regular health provider, Health Link 811, or emergency services through 911 if necessary.

Please also take time to review the specific public health measures that are effective in keeping this risk low. Previous public health measures, outlined in the Alberta webpage: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx> continue to be important and we ask that everyone remain aware of the risk. Please limit social gatherings outside of your immediate household, maintain the 2 meters (or 6 feet) physical distancing, wear a mask in indoor public

spaces, and stay home if feeling unwell. While these guidelines can present significant challenges, they are crucial in preventing further spread.

Finally, we would like extend our sincere gratitude and thanks for the hard work and dedication of all health staff, community leadership, Nation members and everyone who has come together to respond to this pandemic. While we recognize the challenges and concerns that may arise with news of a positive case our on-reserve community of Bushe River, we ask that you continue to support the community response moving forward.

The health and safety of all Dene Tha' First Nation members remains our priority. Thank you again for your patience and support as we continue to work together during this difficult time. In addition to this letter of information we also attached additional information from the Emergency Management Team session held on September 8, 2020.

Sincerely,



Chief James Ahnassay  
Dene Tha' First Nation

Dr. Chris Sarin  
Deputy Medical Officer of Health, FNIHB-AB

Cc: Dr. Wadieh Yacoub, Senior Medical Officer of Health, FNIHB-AB  
Dr. Parminder Thiara, Regional Director, Primary and Population Health, FNIHB-AB