

COVID-19 BULLETIN

MATAWA FIRST NATIONS

Issue 17 - July 31, 2020 - Global Pandemic Day #143

MATAWA EXTENDS OFFICE CLOSURES

Please note, the Matawa FN Management Board of Directors have extended all Matawa office closures to August 28, 2020 (from July 31 previously). This may be extended if necessary. Our staff continue to work remotely, with the exception of essential staff. Our phone lines, including the Matawa Health Co-op Nursing Line (1-833-625-3611) are still open.

COVID-19 SPREAD IN MATAWA FIRST NATIONS

The three (3) positive cases that were confirmed in Eabametoong First Nation on June 15, 2020 have now been cleared. There are currently no new/active cases within Matawa.

MATAWA RADIO SHOW SCHEDULE

All shows take place from 4:00 - 4:30 pm EST. Guests have been scheduled as follows:

- August 4: Crystal Bell, Matawa Health Co-operative Director of Nursing and Clinical Services
- August 11: Jacqueline Gagnon (KKETS) and Lillian Stoney (KKETS graduate student)
- August 25: Audrea Sturgeon & Wayne Slipperjack, Rapid Lynx Telecommunications
- September 8: Brad Battiston, Principal and Jackie Corbett (Vice-Principal) Matawa Education and Care Centre

Tune in to hear their latest updates at: www.wawataynews.ca OR 89.9 FM in Sioux Lookout OR 106.7 FM in Timmins OR Bell TV Channel 962

FUNDING TO MAKE FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS SAFE IN SEPTEMBER STILL NOT AVAILABLE

Matawa Education and the NAN Education Committee have been advocating with provincial and federal governments for funding for COVID-19 related costs to schools since the beginning of April. On July 1, 2020, the Matawa Chiefs sounded on the alarm on the lack of supplementary funding that is needed to make schools on First Nations safe. They directed that a comprehensive **Matawa First Nations COVID-19 Emergency Education Response Plan** be developed that costed out what was needed to protect our students from the spread of COVID-19 so that parents could support the return of their children to school in September. Developed with Education Authorities in the Matawa region, this plan was completed and forwarded to provincial AND federal governments on July 23, 2020. It said that \$25,035,927.17 was needed for all Matawa schools.

On July 30, 2020, the Ontario Progressive Conservative (PC) Ford government announced their \$309 million back-to-school plan. Zero was allocated for First Nations schools. The plan requires a full-time return to school with students in Grades 4 to 12 to wear non-medical masks, with some exemptions in place. Children in kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged to wear masks, but not required. It also provides the option for parents who are not comfortable sending their children to school to not be required to do so. Teachers' unions criticized this plan saying it will be unsafe for students and educators.

Prior to the PC government, on July 27, 2020, the Liberal government put out a plan to safely open schools that was budgeted at \$3.2 billion. It was based on recommendations from the Toronto SickKids Hospital.

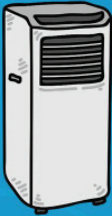
From the federal government, there has been unnerving silence on a plan for First Nations schools. To date, no response has been provided on the Matawa First Nations COVID-19 Emergency Education Response Plan from either the federal or provincial government.

On April 15, 2020, the Matawa Chiefs put out a statement saying: "Our history hasn't changed much since the days of smallpox, polio and tuberculosis—these vaccines were barely given to our Peoples then. We need to be part of the future of Canada and discontinue being seen as 'non-essential' moving forward."

It would seem that if First Nation schools are not afforded the same treatment as provincial schools, history will once again repeat itself in this COVID-19 global pandemic. It is not too late for the provincial and federal governments to act to ensure our students also have some semblance of a #SafeSeptember just like every other student in Ontario.

A well-maintained and operated heating, ventilation and air conditioning system can reduce the spread of COVID-19 in indoor spaces by increasing outdoor air change. Avoid recirculated air.

Can I use air conditioning during COVID-19?



World Health Organization #Coronavirus #COVID19 29 July 2020

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COVID-19 TESTING/SITUATION UPDATE

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Health Unit	Positive	Resolved	Deaths
Porcupine	70	69	8
Thunder Bay	95	92	1
Northwestern	44	42	-
TOTALS FOR HEALTH UNITS IN MATAWA	209	203	9

DATE EXTRACTED - July 31, 2020 - meegwetch to the Matawa Health Co-operative for the compilation of statistics. Please note that the table has been adjusted to account for changes on health unit websites.

NOTES: In terms of positive cases from our last bulletin July 17, 2020: the Porcupine Health Unit is up 1 positive case, and the Thunder Bay Health Unit is up 3 positive cases, and Northwestern Health Unit is up 2 positive cases. The death toll stayed the same.

Navigating Grief and Loss

Find help and advice for yourself or someone you care about.



Any type of loss or change can cause grief, and there's no one right way to grieve. Explore expert advice and resources for when you're experiencing feelings of loss or grief.



Be Kind to Yourself

Try not to judge how you're feeling. All feelings are valid and they can change each day. Remember that people deal with grief, loss and change in different ways.



Do Activities You Enjoy

You may not be able to accomplish the same things when you're coping with grief. It's okay to adjust your daily activities so you can focus on things that bring you meaning or purpose.



Talk About It

If you're experiencing loss or change, find people you can talk to about your feelings. This can include friends and family, support groups and professional helplines.



Make Healthy Choices

Take care of your mental and physical health in positive ways. Exercising, eating healthy foods and getting enough sleep can help overall well-being.