

Support for Indigenous Businesses

- **We recognize that Indigenous businesses face unique challenges and may be disproportionately affected by this unprecedented situation.**
- **On June 11th we announced an additional \$117.0 million to help Indigenous communities support their local businesses and economies, and a new stimulus development fund that will provide \$16 million to support the Indigenous tourism industry.**
- **This is an addition to the \$306.8 million in funding we announced earlier to help Indigenous businesses and ensure business owners have access to the support they need to get through this crisis.**
- **Eligible Indigenous Small and Medium-sized Enterprises have started to receive relief funding since June 1st through the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association and the network of Aboriginal Financial Institutions, as well as through Métis Capital Corporations.**

Urban Supports

- **First Nation, Inuit and Métis living in urban centres face unique needs and challenges.**
- **We heard loud and clear that more support is needed for Indigenous organizations working and operating in urban centres.**
- **That is why on May 21, the Prime Minister announced an additional \$75 million for these organizations supporting Indigenous peoples living in urban areas and off-reserve.**
- **This announcement marks a five-fold increase in the initial funding to support Indigenous community-based solutions that address critical needs.**

If pressed on urban supports:

- **The initial \$15 million allocated to off-reserve First Nations and urban Indigenous organizations was available through a proposal-based process.**
- **The initial allocation was oversubscribed, with over 500 proposals.**
- **That is why we allocated an additional \$75 million to organizations and groups serving Indigenous peoples living in urban areas and off reserve.**
- **We have streamlined the process to flow funds quickly and directly to Indigenous communities and groups across the country.**

If pressed on Community Support Fund Allocation:

- **The \$15 million of funding allocated to regional, urban, and off-reserve Indigenous organizations is designed to allow for maximum flexibility to fund local priorities and needs.**
- **We are working quickly to get funds out the door and have streamlined the application process and disbursement process to allow funds to flow directly to Indigenous communities and groups across the country.**
- **This fund is intended to give communities the ability to fund according to their priorities and needs.**
- **It can, for example, provide support for:**
 - **Increased transportation costs within and outside of communities for community members who can no longer use public transportation;**
 - **Goods to community members who are in preventative isolation or quarantine;**
 - **Support for Elders; and,**
 - **Food bank/nutritional assistance: community care packages of food, water, cleaning products, nutritional supplements.**
- **Once again - this is just a start. We know more support will be needed and we are actively working with Indigenous communities to identify and deliver the specific supports they need.**

If pressed on CAP Court Challenge:

- **Indigenous Services Canada has been made aware of the court challenge brought forward by the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.**
- **Since the beginning of this pandemic, urban and off-reserve Indigenous organizations, along with local community organizations have been working around the clock to provide direct services to Indigenous peoples.**

- In response, ISC has taken immediate action to support these organizations through the Indigenous Community Support Fund with \$15 million allocated to regional, urban, and off-reserve Indigenous organizations.
- Indigenous Services Canada allocated initially \$250,000 to CAP to assist their efforts in supporting Indigenous Peoples during COVID-19.
- This funding allocation was just one part of ISC's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is complemented by actions taken across the government to support the most vulnerable during this time.
- We know more support is needed and are actively working with communities to identify and deliver the supports to make sure no Indigenous community is left behind.

If pressed on who was consulted on urban supports:

- Given the urgency due to the global pandemic, no formal consultations were undertaken with respect to the Urban funding.

Blueberry River First Nation

- **Advancing self-determination for Indigenous Peoples is a key priority of our government.**
- **Blueberry River First Nation is under custom code and in such cases the government does not intervene in governance disputes.**
- **The department has been in discussions with members of the nation and has offered resources to assist the community in resolving its governance disputes.**

Brunswick House First Nation State of Emergency

- **We recognize that substance use can have devastating effects on individuals, families and communities.**
- **ISC is working closely with community elders and leadership, Wabun Tribal Council, the Mayor of the Township of Chapleau and Nishnawbe-Aski Nation to ensure the health safety and wellbeing of community members.**
- **We recently invested \$200 million over five years to support substance use and prevention and treatment services for First Nations and Inuit.**
- **We remain focused on supporting long-term investments that improve the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples.**

Tracking of Opioid Use:

- **We recognize that the opioid crisis continues to have devastating impacts on Indigenous communities nationally, and that quality data is an important part of a comprehensive approach to drug control.**
- **I know that there are significant data limitations on how First Nations and Inuit are affected by this crisis and we are working with partners to overcome these limitations.**
- **We will continue to work with First Nations and Inuit, provincial and territorial partners to explore ways to collectively address opioid-related issues.**

If pressed further

- **Wabun Mental Wellness team is providing mental health services in the community 5 days per week and has begun providing youth workshops.**
- **Brunswick House leadership and staff are working collaboratively on drafting a funding proposal for a land-based healing program.**
- **Our department has offered assistance to the community in the development of an action plan with the community and the Wabun Health Director.**
- **Community identified gaps include access to addiction treatment including detox, mental health specifically for children and youth and prevention and intervention programs.**

Background

Brunswick House is an Ojibway-Cree First Nation, registered population 853, located in close proximity to Timmins, is a signatory to Treaty 9, and a member of the Wabun Tribal Council and the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation. Chief Cheryl St. Denis is the current chief, [Redacted]

On May 20, 2020, Brunswick House First Nation declared a State of Emergency related to the ongoing crisis with opioid and other illicit drugs Brunswick House First Nation leadership, On June 8, 2020 ISC FNIHB received the declaration from NAN and the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre.

On June 11, 2020, ISC FNIHB coordinated a teleconference with Brunswick House First Nation, Wabun Tribal Council Health, NAN, and the Mayor of the Township of Chapleau to discuss their current situation leading up to the declaration of emergency.

Indigenous communities across Canada are disproportionately impacted by the opioid public health crisis and in particular, First Nations in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario.

In spring 2017, the Department of Indigenous Services Canada started to track suspected opioid overdoses in 153 participating First Nations communities. The Department continues to work with partners from across the country to improve data collection and reporting, and to better understand how this crisis is affecting different populations

The Government of Canada has announced significant financial investments to help address the crisis. Budget 2018 is providing \$200 million over five years (2018/19 to 2022-23) and \$40 million per year ongoing to support new investments in substance use prevention and treatment services for First Nations and Inuit including funding to address the ongoing opioid crisis. The investment will support up to: an additional 25 opioid agonist therapy sites offering wraparound services; an additional 75 on the land activities; enhanced services across a network of 45 federally funded treatment centres; and, major renovations at over 20 of these centres.

Indigenous Services Canada allocated this fiscal year over \$425 million towards culturally relevant and community-based mental wellness supports for First Nations and Inuit that aim to: provide treatment, reduce risk factors, promote protective factors and improve health outcomes associated with mental wellness.

Indigenous Services Canada provides several services along the drug misuse continuum.

1. Through the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program, coverage is provided to registered First Nations and recognized Inuit for:
 - Methadone, buprenorphine/naloxone (i.e. Suboxone and generics), slow release morphine and injectable opioid agonist treatment (iOAT) for the treatment of opioid use disorder. To promote client safety, clients receiving these treatments are enrolled in the Client Safety Program formerly known as the Prescription Monitoring Program. Prior to providing coverage for buprenorphine/naloxone, the NIHB Program confirms that the community has infrastructure for the safe storage and handling of the medication.
 - Naloxone, used to treat overdoses, both Injection and nasal spray (Narcan);
 - Medical transportation benefits for clients to access supervised treatment for opioid use disorder (e.g. methadone, Suboxone). The client’s ongoing need for travel is reviewed every six months
 - Up to 22 hours of professional mental health counseling every 12 months, with additional hours as required.

2. In addition to coverage provided under the NIHB Program, in facilities where ISC provides primary care services in First Nations communities, naloxone injection is available for administration by health care professionals to reverse the effects of the overdose. There is also a limited supply of naloxone nasal spray (Narcan) in Nursing Stations that is available to community members at no charge. Injectable naloxone is listed in the Branch’s Nursing Station Formulary as a “must stock” medication.

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Clearwater River Dene Nation Funeral

- **The health and wellbeing of the community members of Clearwater River Dene Nation is our top priority.**
- **We are aware of and closely monitoring the recent cluster of cases in Clearwater River Dene Nation.**
- **The public health investigation and contact tracing on the source and exposure of these cases continues.**
- **BlueMed structures were installed and have been operational since May 9 and additional personal protective equipment has also been deployed.**
- **We will continue to work closely with the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority, Saskatchewan Health Authority, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and the Northwest Incident Command Centre for a collaborative approach in the COVID-19 response.**

Background

As of June 14, Clearwater River Dene Nation has 4 confirmed active cases. There has been no formal outbreak declaration by Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority's Medical Health Officer; however the situation is being closely monitored.

The public health investigation and contact tracing on the source and exposure of these cases continues

BlueMed structures were installed in the community and have been operational since May 9

The Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority, Meadow Lake Tribal Council and the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations have deployed Personal Protective Equipment to the impacted communities. A process is in place that allows communities to request more supplies if needed.

Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority has been working with communities on mobile testing initiatives including door-to-door screening. Additional nursing surge capacity from Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority and Meadow Lake Tribal Council has been sent to the community in response to the recent outbreak.

The Region continues to work closely with Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority, Saskatchewan Health Authority, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and the Northwest Incident Command Centre for a collaborative approach in the COVID-19 response in the La Loche area.

To date, Indigenous Services Canada has supported Clearwater River Dene Nation with \$523,052 to augment their public health response to COVID-19. Indigenous Services Canada continues to assess the needs of the community and adjust accordingly.

Provincial Innu Inquiry

- **The well-being of Indigenous children and families is a priority for the Government of Canada.**
- **The Innu inquiry is a provincially-constituted inquiry that is being led by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Canada has committed to applying to participate in the provincial inquiry once it is called.**
- **We have provided funding to the Innu Nation to coordinate their participation and support community based activities and healing services.**
- **We will continue working with the Innu leadership and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to find long-lasting strategies to support the well-being of the Innu of Labrador.**

If pressed on asking the Provincial Government to convene the Inquiry

- **We welcome the opportunity to participate in this inquiry, and have committed to providing financial support directly to the Innu Nation to support their participation.**
- **The well-being of Indigenous children and families is a top priority for our Government.**
- **This is why Canada will continue working with the Innu Leadership and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure that Innu communities have access to services they need.**

If pressed on Canada's participation in the inquiry

- **Canada has committed to applying to participate in the provincial inquiry once it is called to ensure that a senior federal representative is present at all proceedings, to provide potential witnesses and documentation, and to work with all parties to address the inquiry's recommendations.**

If pressed on funding for child and family services to the Innu

- **We provide funding to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to deliver child welfare protection services for the Innu communities of Natuashish and Sheshatshiu.**
- **We have also provided the Innu communities with funding to develop enhanced prevention services to prevent the children from being removed from their family, their community and their culture.**
- **Since 2016-17, ISC has provided the Innu communities with approximately \$4.4.M to support these activities.**

Background

On July 5, 2017, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the leaders of the Innu Nation signed a Memorandum of Understanding in support of an inquiry that would the deaths of several children and youth while in the care of provincial child protection services. Subsequently, draft Terms of Reference were sent to the Government of Canada, which referenced Canada as a party to the inquiry, and called for Canada to provide funding for legal costs for the Innu parties, translation and interpretation services during the inquiry, and upgrades to information technology infrastructure in Labrador to facilitate the hearings.

As this is a provincially-constituted inquiry, Canada committed to applying for standing to participate in the inquiry, to ensure that a senior federal representative is present at all proceeding to provide evidence and witnesses, and collaborate with all parties to address the inquiry's recommendations. Canada also committed to providing funding to the Innu Nation to support community based activities and healing services.

In April 2018, Indigenous Services Canada approved a funding request of \$379,700 over two fiscal years (2019-20 and 2020-21) from the Innu Nation for coordination of, and travel costs related to, the Innu's participation to the inquiry.

Since March 2019, both the Innu leaders and the Province have asked Canada to reconsider its position to join the inquiry as a co-convenor and cost share all expenditures related to the inquiry.

Although the Department is unable to provide funding specifically for legal representation, it secured in August 2019 additional funding in the amount of \$754,000 for professional costs and healing services. This includes the previously approved amount of \$379,700.

The total secured contribution from ISC is now \$1,133,700, representing almost 70% of the total funding requested by the Innu Nation.

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Peter Ballantyne Cree First Nation Litigation

- **Honouring Canada’s lawful obligations to Indigenous peoples and working collaboratively to renew the relationship based on recognition, rights, respect, cooperation and partnerships is key to achieving reconciliation with Indigenous people in Canada.**
- **The Government of Canada believes that negotiations and dialogue are the best way to resolve legal disputes.**
- **As this matter is currently before the courts, we are unable to comment further.**

Background:

In 2004, the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN) filed litigation against Canada, Saskatchewan, and SaskPower regarding the flooding of First Nation’s reserve land (IR 200) caused by the construction in 1942 and later operation of both the Island Falls Hydro Station and Whitesand Dam. The First Nation alleged breaches of treaty and fiduciary obligations against Canada while claiming in trespass against Saskatchewan and SaskPower. Saskatchewan and SaskPower later cross-claimed against Canada. In 2014 the Saskatchewan Court of Queen’s Bench dismissed all of the First Nation’s claims on the basis of limitations. In 2016 the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal confirmed the dismissal of claims against Canada but allowed the trespass claims against Saskatchewan and SaskPower. In May 2019, Saskatchewan and SaskPower’s applications for summary dismissal of the First Nation’s continuing trespass claim were heard in the lower court, and Canada participated support of the First Nation.

On December 23, 2019, the Saskatchewan Court of Queen’s Bench dismissed the First Nation’s claims for trespass against Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Power, finding that the flooded lands at issue on IR 200 were not reserve lands, as the reserve itself including non-flooded lands was never properly surveyed and selected such that it was excluded from the transfer of lands to the province in 1930. The Court also found that that even if the lands were reserve, Canada’s historical actions amounted to an irrevocable consent to flood the First Nation’s reserve for the lifetime of SaskPower’s hydro-electric project.

Canada filed its appeal factum on May 22, 2020. The First Nation has also filed its appeal factum. The Province of Saskatchewan and Sask Power are to file their appeal factum by July 21, 2020.

As stated in Canada’s appeal factum filed, Canada’s view, consistent with the First Nation’s view, is that this appeal should be allowed and Peter Ballantyne’s entire interest in IR 200 preserved.

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Indigenous Economic Recovery

- **We have been listening to Indigenous leaders on their needs related to rebuilding the Indigenous economy.**
- **We have heard from many leaders on the elements that would support Indigenous communities and businesses to recover from the financial impacts of the pandemic and strengthen the Indigenous economy in the coming years.**
- **We will continue to listen and solicit ideas from all interested parties as plans are developed over the coming months.**

If pressed

- **This pandemic provides us with the opportunity not to simply recreate what was in place, but to work with Indigenous business leaders to build a better and stronger economy than was in place before.**
- **We can seize this opportunity and increase Indigenous participation in the economy and share the wealth of this country more equitably.**
- **I would welcome ideas for the revitalization of the Indigenous economy and the building of resilience of Indigenous businesses from all members of the House.**