



## COMMUNITY NOTICE

For Immediate Release:

Kentenhkó:wa/November 17, 2020

### **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECOMMENDS LIMIT ON SOCIAL GATHERINGS TO HOUSEHOLD ONLY**

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Department of Health (DOH) is continuing to see a rise in COVID-19 cases. As a result, the DOH is advising households to practice an increase in safety measures by physically socializing only with those who reside in your household. The Eastern Ontario Health Unit and the province of Ontario officially recommend a 10-person limit for indoor social gatherings; however, the recent rise in cases has prompted Akwesasne health officials to call for more stringent measures locally in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

"We know that it is very difficult for our families not to visit one another, especially with the holidays upon us," said Acting Director of Health Cindy Francis-Mitchell. "However, visits with family and small social gatherings are factors in the spread of COVID-19 and we have to limit every chance the virus has to spread. These strict measures will not last forever, but we have to unite in this strategy to stop the rise in cases and we are asking for the cooperation of our community."

#### ***DOH RECOMMENDATIONS***

The Department of Health has the following recommendations:

- If you're celebrating U.S. Thanksgiving or Christmas holidays, please gather only with those you reside with. Consider a pot luck in which families share food through drop offs while staying in their own homes for the meal. You will still enjoy each other's cooking and treats, without putting each other at risk. You can be creative and truly enjoy a "family" event while being socially distant. If your family has planned an alternative safe celebration during the holidays, we would love to share it with others. Send your ideas and plans to [communications@akwesasne.ca](mailto:communications@akwesasne.ca).
- If you must socialize with others outside your household, it is highly advised to do so outdoors, as well to wear masks and remain 6-feet/2-metres apart.
- If an essential encounter is necessary, ask if the individual has been sick recently or travelled outside the radius of 100 miles/160 km.
- The recommendation for social bubbles in Ontario is officially on pause due to rising numbers of COVID-19 cases. Your social bubble should only be with those you reside with until further notice. This is a temporary measure, but important advisement for the protection of all our family and friends, and ourselves.



- Please do not assume that those close to you are not at risk of having COVID-19. We understand the natural tendency to let our guards down around those we are close to; this has unfortunately led to further spread of COVID-19.
- Keep elders safe by implementing a plan with your family for care and support to be provided without risking their health. Use phone calls, window visits, drive-by checkups and technology to stay connected.
- Loneliness and depression are expected side effects of the current pandemic and limitations we are experiencing. Be sure to take care of yourself, check on those who might need extra support or even conversation, and utilize technology and safe communication methods to maintain connections.

## ***CONTACT INFORMATION & RESOURCES***

Resources are available for emotional support through the Wholistic Health & Wellness Program which can be reached at 613-575-2250 ext. 3115.

For questions related to the COVID-19 virus and testing, please contact Community Health at 613-575-2250 ext. 3220.

The MCA's Emergency Operations Centre remains activated and can assist with pandemic-related questions. Contact the EOC at 613-575-5005, 613-575-2331 or email [eoc@akwesasne.ca](mailto:eoc@akwesasne.ca). For emergencies, please contact Central Dispatch at 613-575-2000.

The Dept. of Health is working hard to manage and combat the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Akwesasne. We thank you for your willingness and cooperation to help keep Akwesasne safe.

