



## COMMUNITY NOTICE

For Immediate Release:

Onerahtókha/April 1, 2022

### **INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA ISSUES ADVISORY ON NEW COVID-19 VARIANT WAVE**

Dr. James Brooks, MD, FRCPC, of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) has issued an advisory that the new variant of COVID-19, BA.2, is quickly becoming the dominant strain among new infections across Ontario and First Nations communities. Despite having the tools to address the ongoing pandemic, the COVID-19 virus continues to surprise health officials and experts with its ability to change and find ways to transmit more efficiently.

BA.2 is part of the Omicron family and shares most of the same characteristics as the current BA.1 Omicron variant. The most important distinction is that BA.2 is more transmissible than BA.1, meaning that it will infect more people, faster. Current information indicates that the disease is not more severe with BA.2 infection. While re-infection is rare, it is possible with BA.2 after a BA.1 infection.

During the BA.2 wave, we ask community members to continue to follow public health guidelines and take steps to avoid infection, such as wearing a mask, social distancing when gathering with non-household members, and consider receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. If you are demonstrating any symptoms of COVID-19, stay home and use testing measures appropriately. Please note that a positive rapid antigen test is considered a positive case of COVID-19 and no longer requires a confirmatory PCR test.

Vaccination against COVID-19 continues to be the most effective form of prevention against severe illness and serious outcomes of COVID-19 infection. Please consider receiving your first, second, third, or fourth (where indicated) dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

To schedule an appointment to receive your COVID-19 vaccine, please contact the Community Health Program at 613-575-2341 ext. 3220.