



---

## **Pandemic Influenza Planning for On-Reserve First Nations Communities**

---

Canada's Pandemic Influenza Plan maps out how Canada will prepare for and respond to a pandemic influenza outbreak in all parts of the country, including on-reserve First Nations communities.

A specific approach to pandemic influenza planning on federal reserves, defined in Annex B of Canada's Pandemic Influenza Plan, is the result of consultations with key partners and input from Health Canada's regional public health staff (including medical officers and nurses from the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada). It also includes input from members of the federal/provincial/territorial Pandemic Influenza Committee, the Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response at the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, and the National Aboriginal Health Organization.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) delivers public health services to First Nations who live on federal reserves. In transferred communities, (i.e., First Nations communities that have accepted funding and responsibility for public health services), these communities are responsible for providing their own public health services.

Transferred communities can hire their own public health professionals or enter into agreements with provincial or regional health authorities to provide these services. It is important to note that transferred communities must have an emergency preparedness plan as a condition of receiving federal funds upon transfer. FNIHB encourages all First Nations communities to develop pandemic influenza preparedness and response plans to deal with public health issues that may arise during a pandemic.

### **What has Health Canada done?**

Health Canada's regional offices have developed regional pandemic influenza plans or guiding frameworks to assist First Nation communities in developing their community pandemic influenza plans. In most regions, meetings between Health Canada and First Nations to raise awareness of the need for community-level planning on pandemic influenza have occurred. As a result, some plans are now final while others are still being worked on. In certain regions, health directors from First Nations communities are engaged directly with their respective provincial/district/regional health authorities on pandemic influenza planning to clarify the issues of acute care and client management if a pandemic influenza event occurs.

Health Canada has also developed training modules for:

- First Nations community leaders to assist them in preparing emergency response plans around pandemic influenza for their communities.
- Front-line community health care workers to assist them in responding to and managing pandemic influenza on reserve.

### **Current Status**

Regional offices of Health Canada's FNIHB are continuing to work with provincial governments and key aboriginal partners to identify and close gaps in the management of public health emergencies, including pandemic influenza for on-reserve First Nation communities.

Some of the issues being discussed and clarified include: the establishment of clear linkages between provincial/territorial public health authorities and the regional offices of Health Canada's FNIHB to define roles and responsibilities and coordinate their efforts for pandemic influenza planning; and the establishment of formal agreements between provincial public health authorities and regional offices of Health Canada's FNIHB on access to antivirals and vaccines, when developed.

On-reserve First Nation communities, with the support of Health Canada's FNIHB and provincial/regional health authorities, are responsible for developing their community pandemic influenza plans. The successful implementation of these plans, however, requires a coordinated effort involving all key stakeholders (i.e., First Nation communities, FNIHB regions and provincial/regional health authorities). The coordination of these efforts is ongoing and progress is being made.

For more information on the activities and expected roles and responsibilities of the various partners required to ensure the effective and efficient management of pandemic influenza in First Nations communities, please consult (Annex B) of the **Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan** at:

**<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi/index.html>**

### **Media Inquiries:**

Paul Duchesne  
Health Canada  
(613) 954-4807