



Assembly of
Manitoba Chiefs



Manitoba Keewatinowî
Okimakanak



First Nations Health and
Social Secretariat
of Manitoba

Manitoba First Nations COVID-19 Pandemic Response Coordination Team PRCT BULLETIN

September 18th, 2020

The Manitoba First Nations COVID-19 Pandemic Response Coordination Team advise that, since the September 14th bulletin, **ten (10) new First Nations COVID-19 cases were identified as of 7:00 am, Friday, September 18th.** The total number of lab-confirmed positive and probable positive First Nations cases in Manitoba has increased by 10, taking the total to **52** cases. **45** cases are off-reserve and **7** cases are on-reserve. The total number of recovered cases are now **23** and active cases are **29**.

Details of the 10 new First Nations cases:

- 6 cases are in Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA)
- 4 cases are geographically within Interlake Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA), with 2 individuals from Fisher River Cree Nation, 1 individual from Peguis First Nations and 1 individual from Sagkeeng First Nation.
- 1 is close contact of a known case, 1 has unknown acquisition and 8 are still under investigation in terms of identifying the potential acquisition.

Details of all 52 First Nations cases:

- **37 cases** in Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA)
- **8 cases** in the Interlake Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA)
- **2 cases** in the Southern Health-Santé Sud (SHSS)
- **4 cases** in the Prairie Mountain Regional Health Authority (PMH)
- **1 case** in the Northern Regional Health Authority (NRHA)
- The number of recovered cases is **23**
- The number of currently hospitalized cases is **1**
- The number of deaths among First Nations people due to COVID-19 is **0**.
- **36** females and **16** males
- The age range of positive people: **1-69**
- Most people in the **60-69** age group (in comparison to **20-29** for other Manitobans)
- Travel-acquired cases: **10%** (in comparison to **14%** for other Manitobans)
- Acquisition through contact with a known positive case: **56%** (in comparison to **61%** for other Manitobans)
- Average time from symptom onset until testing: **5 days** (in comparison to **4 days** for the rest of MB)
- **48%** of cases reported the presence of an underlying illness (in comparison to **31%** for the rest of MB)

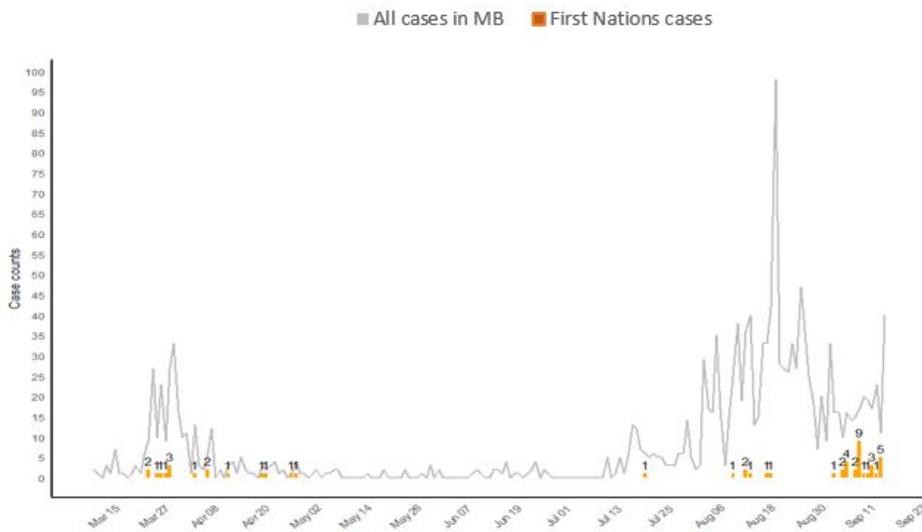


Figure 1. Epidemic curve of First Nations testing in Manitoba.

First Nation Testing

As of September 18th, 2020, the number of First Nations COVID-19 tests has risen by 732 (since September 14th), for a total of 17273 tests conducted for First Nations across Manitoba since the pandemic began. Current 5-day COVID-19 test positivity rate in Manitoba First Nations is 1.31% which is lower than Manitoba’s 5-day test positivity rate of 1.7%. For First Nations the average test number per person tested is 1.21, which is higher than the overall testing rate in Manitoba, at 1.15 tests/person tested.

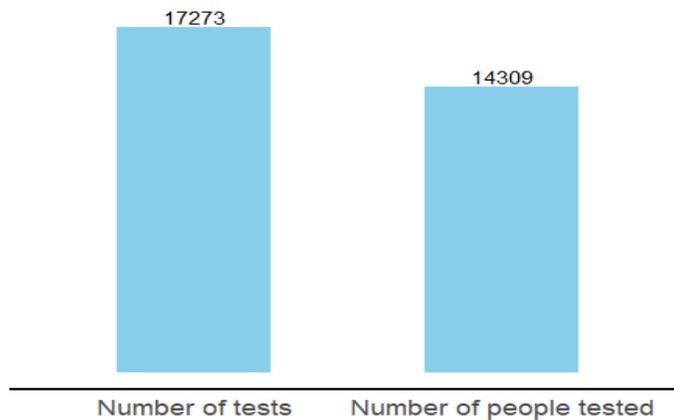


Figure 2. Number of tests performed, and number of people tested.

The total number of tests in First Nations represents 11% of the overall tests done in Manitoba; testing numbers are highest in hospital, particularly in Winnipeg; the main sources of test samples excluding Winnipeg were from nursing stations.

- Asymptomatic surveillance has yet to identify any First Nations cases.
- Except in the very young, testing rates are higher in women, 59% overall. This mirrors the provincial testing trends where there are also more women who are being tested at 56%.
- A total of 14309 First Nations people have been tested to date. Of those, 59% of tests were completed for First Nations who live on reserve and 41% of tests were completed for First Nations who live in urban or rural areas.

Unlike the majority of cases in Manitoba, First Nations people are most likely to be infected through close contact to a known case of COVID-19.

Below are some of the testing trends noted for First Nations individuals.

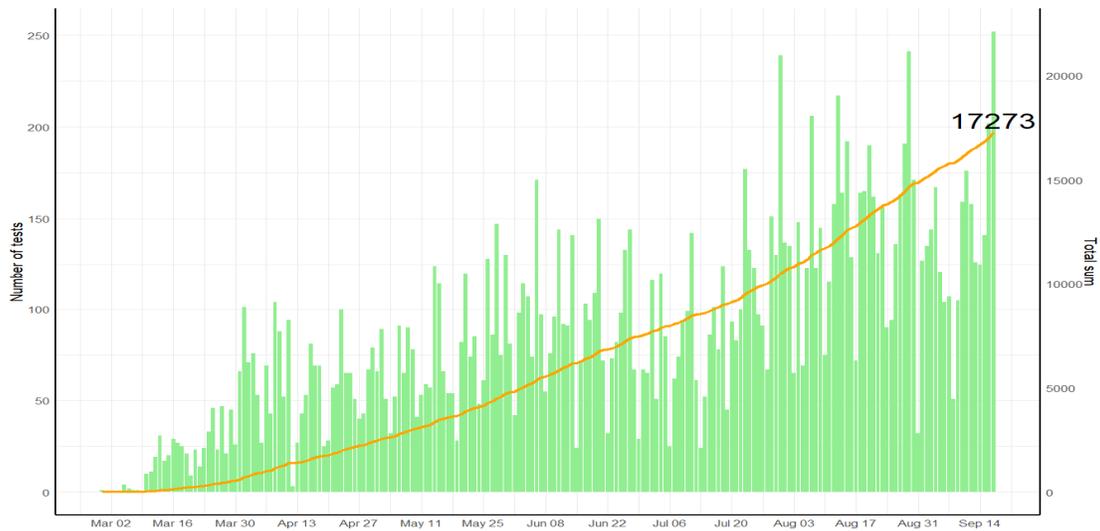


Figure 3. Epidemic curve of First Nations testing in Manitoba.

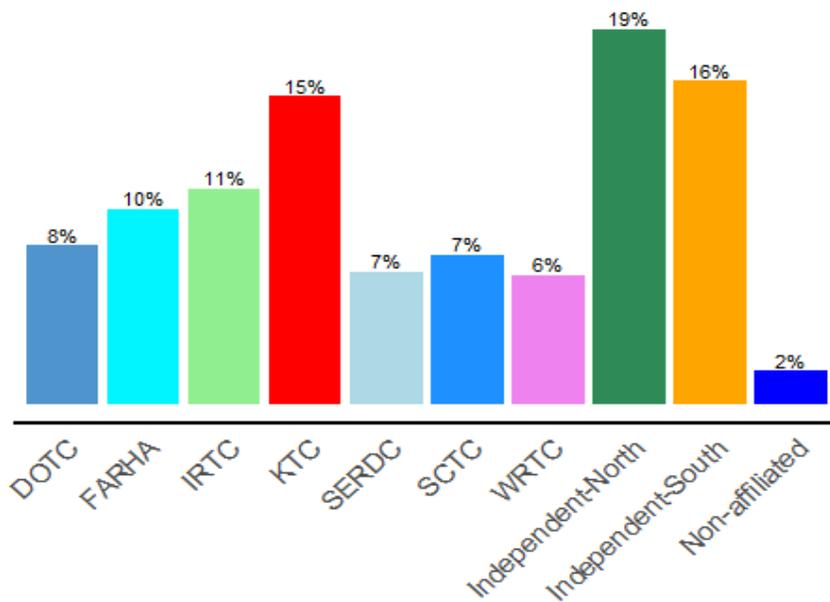


Figure 4. Number of people tested for COVID-19 by Tribal Council region of home community.

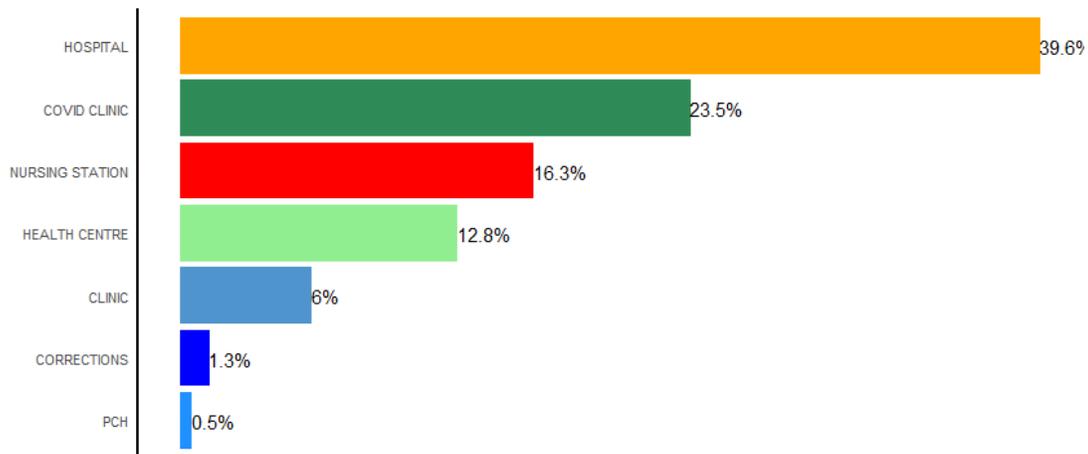


Figure 5. Test sampling by type of site.

First Nation Contacts

- 176 First Nations have been named as contacts over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic
- 61% of COVID-19 infections were a result of close contact to a positive COVID-19 case
- Of the 52 First Nation cases, 23 cases can be linked to clusters or outbreaks

Discussion

The epidemiological curve for COVID-19 in First Nations people in Manitoba is showing a current concerning trend. Our families and connections across communities are a strength in many respects, but when it comes to COVID-19 the mobility and these connections can be a risk for spread. We also need to be mindful of the number of cases in the 60-69 year old age group, as we know about higher rates of co-morbid illness in First Nations people and the higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 in older individuals.

It was inevitable that we would see cases in First Nations communities. Our goal is to quickly contain the spread of COVID-19 and limit it to small numbers of cases or clusters. We want to prevent widespread community transmission and avoid outbreaks in settings like health care facilities and schools. We remind everyone that we need to continue to be vigilant about following effective public health measures to reduce and slow the spread of COVID-19. At this time, PRCT encourages the following actions.

- Be cautious with and if possible, delay travel to/ from regions of the province designated as Orange (Restricted) or Red (Critical) risk levels.
- If travel to an Orange zone is necessary, keep the number of people traveling as low as possible and be diligent with physical distancing and hand hygiene and follow all measures such as mandatory non-medical masks that may be in place.
- If you have family who live in other communities/ areas from you, consider ways to connect that are lower risk for spreading COVID-19:
 - Connect by phone or other social media platforms.
 - Only travel to visit in vehicles with people who live in your household.
 - Visit outside as much as possible.
 - Avoid sharing food/ serving dishes/ utensils/ condiments.
 - If you are visiting older relatives, consider limiting your visiting with others or attendance at large gatherings.

- Practice physical distancing measures and stay 2m/ 6ft away from people who are outside of your household.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.
- Regularly clean commonly touched surfaces such as door handles and countertops.
- Wear non-medical masks when you are in places where physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g. crowded stores or when using public/ community transportation services).
- Follow gathering size orders.
- Consider postponing any large gatherings or reducing the numbers who attend in person.
- Stay home and self-isolate if you have any new symptoms that could be from COVID-19, no matter how mild the symptoms are.
- Present for testing if your symptoms last for more than 24 hours.

You can access testing by calling the health facility in your community, going to the RHA testing site closest to you, calling your health care provider, or use the Screening Tool available here <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/> to find out when/ where you can be tested.

COVID-19 resources and links:

Manitoba First Nations COVID-19 Alert Levels

<https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/PRCT-MB-First-Nations-COVID-Alert-Levels.pdf>

School Division Reopening Plans

<http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19/restoring/school-divisions.html>

Restoring Safe Schools: August 13 - School Settings Practice Guidance and Protocols

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/restoring/rss-practice-guidance.html>

Applying Current Public Health Orders and Guidance to Community Events

<https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/PRCT-GUIDE-Applying-Current-Public-Health-Orders-and-Guidance-to-Community-Events-29May2020-FINALasof459pm.pdf>

Public Health Considerations During COVID-19 for Sundance Leaders

https://d5d8ad59-8391-4802-9f0a-f5f5d600d7e9.filesusr.com/ugd/38252a_de8caedd52c5409e9607394c383c7929.pdf?index=true

Manitoba government COVID-19 information

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/>

Please visit any of the following websites for more information and resources on COVID-19

www.manitobachiefs.com www.scoinc.mb.ca www.mkonation.com www.fnhssm.com