



COVID-19 GN Update

April 8, 2020

Premier's update:

There are still no confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 in Nunavut.

Today, the total number of people under investigation to date is 369. 255 people are currently under investigation and 114 people are no longer under investigation.

I do want to take a moment to follow-up on some misinformation and misunderstanding stemming from the announcement yesterday that teachers are expected to return to work on April 21. This is specific to STAFF ONLY, so that they can prepare and develop continuity of learning plans in the case the school closure is extended.

I have received several calls and messages about students going back to school in two weeks. This has not been decided. Dr. Patterson will determine in the coming days and weeks if the closure will be extended or not.

We understand that COVID-19 pandemic has brought a lot of uncertainty, but we do need to help our students through the remainder of the school year – whatever that may look like. Teachers and school leaders have an important role to play in supporting our students and our communities during this time, and that is why we are asking them to return to work.

We are committed to helping students and guiding their success.

I know that Minister Joanasie will speak more to this in just a moment, and should be able to speak in more detail.

I also want to touch on something Dr. Patterson mentioned yesterday about COVID-19 and smoking. We know that COVID-19 is mainly a respiratory disease and early research shows that smoking makes the symptoms worse.

For the latest COVID-19 information and GN Departments updates in all languages:

<https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>; <https://www.gov.nu.ca>



Smokers are also likely to be more vulnerable to COVID-19 as smoking increases the possibility of transmission due to touching one's face and lips. Please don't share cigarettes or pick up discarded cigarette butts. Remember to wash your hands often with soap and water and try not touch your face and mouth with your hands.

Nunavummiut, if you've been thinking about quitting smoking, there's no time like the present. Your health can noticeably improve in the days and weeks after quitting and that could make a difference against the virus.

If you do smoke, avoid close contact with family and friends. This will help minimize exposure to second-hand smoke and possibly the virus.

You're not alone in quitting smoking – support is available! Message a counsellor on the Tobacco Has No Place Here Facebook page or call 1-866-368-7848 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Thank you again to everyone for their continued patience, help, support, understanding and commitment to community during all this. COVID-19 has turned everything upside down, but we will get through this.

Minister of Education update

Yesterday, the Department of Education sent a letter to all school staff about returning to work in their home communities on April 21, 2020. This is specific to STAFF ONLY, so that they can prepare and develop continuity of learning plans in the case the school closure is extended.

I want to clarify the numbers I provided yesterday – there are 1,185 staff who work in schools across the territory. Ninety-three (93) of these staff are currently out of the territory, making their way back to their home communities. This represents eight per cent (8%) of all school staff.

Teachers across the country are working hard to support learning at home for students so that they are not disadvantaged by the school closure. Our students deserve the same supports, and this is why we are asking teachers to work during this time.

Teachers returning to work will focus on supporting students in their education and their wellbeing by developing learning packages. This is particularly important for those students that do not have access to online resources and those who are on specialized learning plans.

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School staff who may have travelled out of territory **must** undergo a mandatory 14-day isolation period in a GN-designated isolation hub in the south before returning to Nunavut. This is the same process that all Nunavut residents, FANS students, and medical travel patients returning to Nunavut have been following. This process was established under the orders of the Chief Public Health Officer.

Nunavut residents, including school staff, are responsible for their travel costs to return home to Nunavut. The GN is covering the cost of the isolation hubs for all Nunavut residents, including school staff.

All GN staff, including teachers, are expected to work from within the territory. We will address any requests from staff who currently are out-of-territory to work remotely on a case-by-case basis.

The Department of Education has been in continuous contact with the Nunavut Teachers' Association (NTA) and the Coalition of Nunavut DEAs.

They both support the decision to bring teachers back to work to ensure that students can continue to learn and are supported during school closures.

Schools will **only** be reopened to students once the Chief Public Health Officer determines it is safe to do so. However, we need our staff back at work by April 21 to prepare for our students' success and progress, whatever the next step may be.



As part of the Government of Nunavut's (GN) effort to protect Nunavummiut against the risk of COVID-19, GN Departments are implementing the following:

Department of Health Services

Isolation Sites

- Those in isolation have access to cable, internet, three meals a day, fresh linens and cleaning supplies. Garbage is picked up daily. These costs are covered by the Government of Nunavut. The GN will pay for diapers, baby formula and feminine products. Guests are responsible to order these products through the provided delivery services, but they will not be charged for the items.
- The information package has been updated to include information on grocery orders and take out. Both can be delivered to the hotel. These deliveries and related costs are not covered by the GN.

Volumes

Total (All Isolation Locations)	
Traveler Type	Guests in Isolation as of April 7
Medical Travel	246
Public	125
Students	60
Total	431

Travel requests

As of April 7, there are 446 requests, 339 of which are critical worker requests.

Request Status	#	%
Approved (includes critical and non-critical)	331	74.2%
Denied	49	11.0%
Pending	66	14.8%
Total	425	100%

Nunavummiut's health is our shared responsibility! Remember: wash your hands and surfaces, practice social distancing, listen to the advice of health officials, and stay home if you're sick.

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