For Immediate Release: September 30, 2020

Five New Cases of COVID-19 within 24 Hours, Community Urged to Follow Public Health Directions

Within 24 hours three new lab confirmed positive cases, and two probable cases of COVID-19 have been reported by Ohsweken Public Health in Six Nations Territory.

A probable case is when a person(s) have been identified as having a high-risk of exposure (in close contact with a positive case, and symptomatic) but has declined testing to confirm, and are treated as positive case(s) by Ohsweken Public Health.

Contact-tracing is underway by Ohsweken Public Health and each of the identified contacts has been provided with the appropriate Public Health guidance based on their level of contact. Thanks to the ongoing work of the Six Nations Assessment Centre, individuals have been in self-isolation since onset of symptoms.

These latest confirmation of positive cases brings the total number in Six Nations (since the start of the pandemic) to twenty-one (21). Since the pandemic began, the Six Nations COVID-19 Information and Assessment Centre has completed 1946 tests and of those tests, 1821 were confirmed negative cases.

This increase overnight indicates COVID-19 is here in Six Nations and we are at a point in the pandemic where cases may now be community acquired (where the source of the virus cannot be easily identified) urging the community to follow the core health principles.

Six Nations members are reminded that as a largely populated First Nations community, we are automatically at a heightened risk of contracting, spreading and fighting the virus for various reason such as lack of access to clean water, over crowded housing and underlying health conditions.

“If you have high risk people living in your household you must conduct continual risk assessments when thinking of leaving your home and community.” States Elected Chief Mark Hill. “Guidance and educational pieces are out there; we continue to provide such for the community and are requesting the community to please follow these measures.”

Let these spike in cases be a wake-up call to the community to increase awareness, tighten up social circles, and follow public health measures such as wearing masks and physical distancing with those who do not live in your immediate household. We must remain vigilant, we cannot let our guard down and we must continue to protect our people.

Please reconsider any Thanksgiving or other plans for gathering with friends and family in the near future. We know that everyone wants life to get back to normal, but we need to be extra cautious at this time, especially if you or anyone in your household is vulnerable due to being elderly or have underlying health conditions.
“Since moving to stage 2.5 the community are becoming slack with the core health principles, please let these 5 new cases be a stark reminder that the virus is still in and around Six Nations Territory,” says Six Nations Health Service’s Director Lori Davis Hill. “To see this through with minimal cases we must not ignore the core health principles, my advice would be to conduct yourself as though you have the virus and don’t want to spread it, and as if everyone else has the virus and you don’t want to get it.”

To reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, it is critical that all Six Nations members continue to follow everyday steps to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission and follow the below core health principles:

1. Staying home when ill or keeping your child home from school when ill, even with mild symptoms;
2. Maintain physical distance by keeping at least two metres from others outside your immediate household;
3. Wash hands regularly with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available;
4. Wear a face covering when in public places or when physical distancing is a challenge or where it is mandatory to do so and
5. Clean/disinfect commonly touched or high traffic surfaces in the home and at work to minimize the spread of germs and viruses.

Ohsweken Public Health are reminding the community of their responsibility when it comes to contact-tracing, a tool that continues to prove extremely effective in finding and containing the COVID-19 virus, but only when an infected person can list the people they have been in contact with over the past 14 days. Contact tracing and self-isolation are not punishment. The Public Health nurses are not passing any judgment on anything you have done, they are simply trying to contain the virus from spreading further, thereby saving lives.

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