

Leaders Establish Regional Incident Command Centre (ICC)

Northern Saskatchewan is facing an unprecedented emergency with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Northwest region is responding with a unique collaboration.

First Nations leadership and communities, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, and Northern Saskatchewan municipalities have come together to create an Incident Control Centre (ICC), to maximize their energies and resources. A unique initiative launched last week, the ICC is working to educate and support communities, coordinate the region's collective human, technical, and community resources, and to inform health authorities and governments about regional needs. It's working.

The ICC's daily conference calls allow the region's communities to share their needs and reach out to partners and friends for support. With open arms, people are responding to their calls.

There are many different communities in the Northwest, and some are very small with almost no resources to protect their people. Due to insufficient investment, some communities in the region's lack emergency planning, funding, and equipment.

All jurisdictions coming together is making it easier for the region's voice to be heard in provincial and national planning conversations. The ICC's ability to provide a community perspective and understanding of the region's resources and needs, has become invaluable in collaborating with provincial health authorities and decision-makers.

ICC is coordinating regional needs for such things as financial support, equipment, and planning:

- The Joint Leadership Group is supporting the creation of a regional pandemic plan which is reflective of the region's and community's reality. Some aspects of this plan will be developing an early response team(s), early detection, containment, and home care.

- If a surge of infected citizens overwhelms the provincial health system and where community members are critically ill and cannot be evacuated to urban hospitals, what then do the communities and families do to take care of their sick? The ICC is working with provincial health authorities to help prepare communities to take care of their sick.
- To mitigate the spread of the virus to these northern communities, the ICC have submitted funding requests for community and regional checkpoints on the main roads coming into the region. They are also seeking funding for communities to sustain check-points and other community needs such as food. These checkpoints and other community activities have become vital tools in protecting members from COVID-19. Communities are experiencing stress and fatigue caused by the worry to maintain checkpoints with limited local financial resources to adequately protect themselves from community spread.

Saskatchewan's Northwest region includes communities along the 155 highways north from Green Lake, approximately 296km north of Saskatoon.

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