
THESSALON FIRST NATION

40 Sugarbush Rd. • Thessalon, Ontario • P0R 1L0 • Telephone: 705-842-2323 • Fax 705-842-2332

March 25, 2020

****ATTENTION THESSALON FIRST NATION COMMUNITY MEMBERS****

A MESSAGE FROM THESSALON FIRST NATION CHIEF & COUNCIL

Thessalon First Nation is continuing with proactive measures to protect the community in regards to the COVID-19.

We understand that this is a period of uncertainty and concern for our community and each of us. We recognize that people are worried about a lot of things: their health, the health of their loved ones, their jobs or businesses, their supply of food and essential items. With all of the information we are receiving, this anxiety is natural and understandable. Please be rest assured that Thessalon First Nation is doing everything we can to stay focused and maintaining our essential services. We can assure you that your community leaders and staff members are working together and have been meeting regularly and we will continue to communicate with one another, the community, support one another and listen to the advice of our public health professionals.

Again, we ask that we all do our part to help keep Thessalon First Nation safe. Every single person in our community has a role to play in limiting the spread of COVID-19. This includes:

STAY HOME! If you have to go out for essential items, please keep 2 meters between you and others.

WASH YOUR HANDS!

COVER YOUR COUGH/SNEEZE!

SELF ISOLATE FOR 14 DAYS IF YOU HAVE TRAVELLED OR ARE FEELING SICK!

We will continue to provide weekly updates and information as they become available. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this difficult time. We will continue to work together and by doing so we will manage through this together. Attached to this notice are updates provided by our essential service departments.

THESSALON FIRST NATION HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Current Essential Services:

- **Wellness Checks** – Health Centre Staff will continue contacting community members during the Covid-19 Pandemic to perform regular wellness checks. Staff are doing their best to ensure basic necessities are being met.
- **Nurse Practitioner and Physician Services** – All non-essential appointments are being postponed until further notice. ***There will be no walk-in clients accepted.*** Essential Services are being offered via Virtual Care (telephone, email, video services). At this time, Dr. Haapaala has suspended clinic services due to the strain put on the local health care system. Please see attached, a list essential and non-essential appointments from MAAMWESYING – North Shore Community Health Services.
- **Suboxone Program** – Until March 31, 2020 the Suboxone Program is being coordinated remotely. Participants in the program have been contacted by nursing staff and prescriptions filled according to a Physician's recommendations. Following March 31st, nursing staff will contact participants to ensure there is no disruption in service.
- **Mental Health Services** – Crisis services are being managed remotely, Counsellors will be checking in via telephone with their current clients and emergency crisis response teams are in place. If you or a family member are experiencing a mental health related emergency, please contact
 - **Maamwesying Services** 705-844-1551 Monday – Friday 8:30 am to 4:00 pm
 - **Sault Ste. Marie Mental Health** 705-759-5989
 - **Algoma Crisis Response** 705-759-3398
 - **Talk for Healing** 1-855-554-4325
 - **Emergency Response** – 911
- **Prescription Pick Ups** – Health Centre staff are contacting community members and coordinating with the pharmacy in Thessalon to ensure prescription supplies are being monitored. If you require a prescription please make staff aware of this during the wellness check. Currently, a plan is mobilized to have prescriptions picked up and brought to Elders homes.
- **Child Well-Being** – The health and well-being of children continue to be the utmost importance. Nogdawindamin will continue to administer essential child

contact Nogdawindamin at 705-946-3700. Band Representative and Family Preservation Services are essential and will continue virtually. Chris Belisle (705-971-5657) and Meghan McLean (705-542-6932) are available via telephone.

- **Home and Community Care Program** – As an essential service to the community we will continue to do our best to provide care to our clients during this difficult time. Daily Covid-19 screening tools have been put into place for both our health care workers and clients. We will continue to monitor clients very closely. For any questions or concerns please contact Home and Community Care Manager Christine McEwan via telephone 705-542-1905.
- **Social Programming** – Not an essential service, has been deemed important for our community. At this time, Programming Staff will make every attempt to continue to deliver safe socially responsible programming remotely. All safety precautions will be taken to ensure social distancing continues and is respected for all house holds.

THESSALON FIRST NATION EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

At this point the Ministry has provided parents with an online portal to support learning over the next two weeks, while students and families take care of their personal well-being. During this time, School Boards and the Ministry are proactively developing contingency plans for learning beyond April 3rd, in case they are needed. Parents are asked to visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/learn-at-home> to support their child's learning over these two weeks and further information will be provided once available for anything beyond April 3.

So, at this point, there is no expectation of mandatory online learning for the next two weeks – just online supports. **However, if the closure goes beyond April 3, there will be plans put into place on how to allow students to continue learning.**

We will be supplying and delivering students from grade K to 5 with packaged booklets for grade appropriate learning. Grade 6 to 12 are all online courses on the website <https://www.ontario.ca/page/learn-at-home>

THESSALON FIRST NATION NIIGAANIIN SERVICES

Niigaaniin will continue to service and financial assistance to those who already receive social assistance. If individuals need to apply for Ontario Works, please contact Bobbi-Jo McColman at 705-842-2323 and leave a message, or email gmcsierra00@hotmail.com. Individuals can also contact Niigaaniin Regional Office at 705-692-9771 or 1-877-633-7558.

THESSALON FIRST NATION DISPENSARY

Effective March 30th, 2020 the new hours will be as follows:

Monday & Tuesday's CLOSED

Wednesday – Sunday's 12pm – 7pm

THESSALON FIRST NATION PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Thessalon First Nation Public Works is taking all the necessary steps to protect the public during these difficult times. We would like to reassure the community members of our on-going commitment to ensure the community has safe drinking water, water samples are being tested daily. With the spring run-off, we continue to ensure that our roads are safe. On-going maintenance of our sanitation site continues.

The following community areas are off limits and closed until further notice:

- Sliding hill
- Playground
- Baseball Field
- Skating Rink
- Skating Rink Change room
- Gym

Guidance for Appointments during COVID 19 Pandemic

Please be advised that due to the current public health emergency underway, scheduled appointments are being conducted in an alternative format, postponed or cancelled. This will help us to reduce the risk and ensure the safety of our clients and staff.

Currently Booked Appointments

- Staff are to call and inform patients that their physician, NP, MHW, will contact them by telephone around the time of their currently booked appointment for a non-essential appointment, or it can be cancelled/postponed until further notice.

No New appointments

- Please do not book any future non-essential service appointments until further notice.

Non-essential services will be postponed until further notice, not limited to:

- Routine and non-urgent assessments
- Annual assessments
- Screening programs
- Preventative, elective consults
- Routine diabetic follow up
- Paps
- Drivers license, MTO forms etc.
- Elective Immunizations
- Physicals
- Well babies
- Cryotherapy
- Smoking cessation program

Essential services, by telephone or video, not limited to:

- Prenatal
- Routine scheduled Infant/children immunizations
- Patient specific treatment required for specific condition i.e. injection(s)
- Medication refills
- Insulin starts and adjustments
- Follow up for lab tests and diagnostics

In-Office Essential services

- At the discretion of the provider

In-clinic essential services to continue as scheduled with the Minobimaadizing Support Coordinators:

- Suboxone Program (Please call 705-945-4677 for more information)



Virtual Care for Essential Appointments Only

In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Ontario's state of emergency and province-wide measures to protect family doctors, nurse practitioners, office staff and clients from getting infected with COVID-19, Maamwesying will be implementing virtual care appointments (telephone and video) effective immediately. This measure is to prevent clients from potentially being exposed to COVID-19 virus and supports the call for social distancing measures.

Virtual care such as telephone and videoconference appointments for essential care only will halt the spread of the virus in our clinics and waiting rooms. It will also help to save on use of PPE equipment which is currently in short supply and on backorder for most of our clinics.

Effective immediately, all N'mninoeyaa clinics including Baawaating Family Health Team will be offering their clients virtual clinic appointments by way of telephone, email or video conferencing using virtual platforms such as OTN (Telemedicine), Zoom, etc. dependent on client access to a smart phone, laptop or other devices that will support this type of care.

Effective immediately, all non-essential and non-urgent appointments will be postponed to a later date until further notice. Essential care appointments will be done through telephone or video when possible. There will be no walk in clients. Clients will receive advice from their physician or NP on how to care for themselves in the comfort of their home.

We must all do our part to "flatten the curve" and reduce the risk of our staff and clients from being exposed to the Coronavirus.