July 24, 2020

COVID-19 OUTBREAK DECLARED ON HAIDA GWAII

The Province of BC has announced a "[community] outbreak on Haida Gwaii, with 13 total confirmed cases of COVID-19 to date. Of the 13 people who have tested positive, one person has recovered and 12 are active cases. At this time cases are all local residents. While the initial source of transmission is still being investigated, the cases are all epidemiologically linked. Some are related to residents who had recently travelled off island, and others are from exposure to known cases."

The Council of the Haida Nation, Skidegate Band Council and Old Massett Village Council remind people that the intention of declaring an outbreak is **NOT** to increase anxiety or panic but to allow an increased response of human, financial and service resources to help the communities flatten the curve of infections/new cases on Haida Gwaii.

At this time, we are reminding community members to practice lateral kindness – there are some community members who are ill at home – let's provide them with a circle of care and support.

We also want to decrease the stigma that may exist about COVID-19:

- Let's not blame and shame people who may be sick with COVID-19
- Let's not do anything that would make it difficult for people with possible symptoms/infection to come forward to be tested
- If you have any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 infection, please go through the pathways to get tested as soon as possible

It is important for residents of Haida Gwaii to remain calm in the midst of this outbreak – we are encouraging you all to focus on doubling down on the recommended public health measures – physically distance, frequent hand-washing, wear face masks in public or places where you can't physically distance, keep your bubbles small, avoid large gatherings – including funerals and ceremonies (for now).

Please watch for updates from the Council of the Haida Nation and the Skidegate and Old Massett Emergency Operations Centers.