

No new cases of COVID-19; top-up funding for front-line workers

20 May 2020

FREDERICTON (GNB) – For the 14th consecutive day, Public Health reports no new cases of COVID-19 in New Brunswick.

There have been no new cases reported since May 6 and just two confirmed cases since April 18.

The number of confirmed cases in New Brunswick remains at 120, the number of active cases is zero and everyone has recovered. As of today, 21,144 tests have been conducted.

The latest updates and information on confirmed COVID-19 cases and laboratory testing in New Brunswick [are available online](#).

Dr. Jennifer Russell, chief medical officer of health, praised the resiliency of New Brunswickers and the efforts that many have made to adjust to the stresses created by this pandemic.

“As we move forward, we will need to continue to adapt, learn and prepare for the next phase of our recovery,” said Russell. “With each step we take, we are building resiliency, as individuals and as a province. As we adjust to each phase, there will be challenges that will test this resiliency. But as we figure out how to get through each situation, we will be stronger for the experience and better prepared for the challenges ahead.”

Top-up funding for front-line workers

“Since this pandemic began, essential workers across the province have stepped up for New Brunswick,” said Premier Blaine Higgs. “In recognition of this, our province has sent a written request to the federal finance minister outlining a program to provide a monthly top-up of approximately \$500 for 16 weeks for front-line workers in a number of sectors.”

Those eligible for the funding include employees in:

- early learning and child care facilities
- home support
- special care homes, community residences and group homes
- homeless shelters and food banks
- domestic violence outreach and transition homes
- Workers must earn \$18 per hour or less to be eligible.

The top-up will be paid by employers every four weeks. The exception will be child care facilities, which will split the first and last payments to align with existing payment schedules.

Workers at early learning and child care facilities will receive their top-up retroactive to May 19 and it will continue for 16 weeks. This is in recognition of their return to work as the child care sector reopened.

All other sectors will be paid retroactively from March 19 to July 9.

Employers will be reimbursed by the departments of Education and Early Childhood Development or Social Development.

Early learning and child care facilities reopen

More than 50 per cent of New Brunswick's early learning and child care facilities reopened on Tuesday. That number is expected to reach 80 per cent by June 1.

"The reopening of child care facilities is a key element in enabling people to return to work," said Higgs. "New Brunswickers must be able to return to work if we are going to reopen our province."

Border restrictions remain in place

All unnecessary travel into New Brunswick remains prohibited, and peace officers are authorized to turn away visitors when they attempt to enter.

"As we continue to move through the phases of our recovery plan, it is important to remember COVID-19 still poses a risk to our communities," said Higgs. "Quebec, Nova Scotia and Maine all have active cases of COVID-19, which is why we have chosen to keep our borders controlled at this time."

Higgs said it is recognized that travel by some people is necessary. This includes residents of other provinces who must enter New Brunswick to work or to receive medical treatment, and commercial vehicle drivers delivering goods.

T-shirts promote provincial pride and support charity

Stepping up for my New Brunswick / Faire ma part pour mon Nouveau-Brunswick T-shirts will be sold by the United Way, with proceeds going to support mental health initiatives in New Brunswick.

"Stepping up in support of our province is something to be proud of," said Higgs. "This is the latest in a long list of ways that New Brunswickers have shown their resilient and caring nature. From signs thanking hospital staff to encouraging messages in windows and on sidewalks, as well as drive-by birthday parades, people have stayed connected and grateful."

Orders can be placed by contacting United Way offices in Fredericton, Moncton or Saint John.