



Press Release

COVID-19 Response Must Address Risks to Off-Reserve Urban and Rural Indigenous People

March 12, 2020 (Ottawa, ON) - Prime Minister Trudeau announced \$1 billion in funding to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan includes \$100 million for the federal public health response, including supports for First Nations and Inuit communities, and \$500 million in aid to the provinces and territories.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) calls on the government of Canada to include targeted support for off-reserve urban and rural Indigenous people. Today over 80 per cent of Indigenous Peoples live off-reserve, in urban and rural communities. In addition to the support being provided for on-reserve Indigenous people, government must also consider the specific risk factors and complications faced by urban and rural off-reserve Indigenous people as well.

According to the most recent census, close to one-fifth (18.3 per cent) of Aboriginal people lived in housing that was crowded compared to only 8.5 per cent for the non-Aboriginal population, putting them at elevated risk to contract the virus. Research further shows that Indigenous children in Canada are subject to higher rates of respiratory disease, increasing the danger of suffering complications or death if infected. ¹.

We call on all levels of government to consider the need for targeted, accessible interventions to safeguard the public health of Indigenous people living in urban, rural and remote communities across Canada.

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the interests of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, approximately 80% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3448538/>