



Press Statement

Auditor General COVID Report: Shortages of PPE, Staffing for Indigenous Communities.

May 28 (Ottawa, ON) –

On May 26th the Auditor General (AG) submitted to Parliament their 11th report on Health Resources for Indigenous Communities during the COVID pandemic. This report confirmed the same gaps that had been identified by the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and their Provincial and Territorial Organizations.

Major gaps highlighted by the Auditor General's report were the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) as well as healthcare workers for communities.

CAP's communities noted these gaps under the programs they administered under the Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF). Elders and Seniors expressed that they were "Extremely Concerned" about the inability to acquire PPE and sanitation supplies in stores, and healthcare workers were unavailable to reach out. The pandemic has exacerbated issues we have been experiencing for a long time, due to lack of relationship-building with off-reserve communities.

"The AG report confirms what our communities have been reporting since COVID began" said CAP National Chief Elmer St Pierre. "Many are still waiting for outreach from ISC and for access to sanitary equipment, vaccines, nurses and doctors. Instead of getting help, they are being bounced back and forth between Federal and Provincial levels of government."

The CAP-Daniels Supreme Court Decision of 2016 acknowledged that CAP's communities were "in a jurisdictional wasteland with significant and obvious disadvantaging consequences." in reference to the lack of leadership from federal and provincial authorities. The ruling 5 years ago was intended at "ending a jurisdictional tug-of-war".

"We've seen these issues before. It behooves the government to listen to the ruling the Supreme Court laid down 5 years ago and take real steps to integrate CAP's communities into the emergency response same as any other Indigenous communities" said CAP Vice-Chief Kim Beaudin.

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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, over 70% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.