



# Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

AHOUSAHT  
DITIDAHT  
ʔIIHATIS / CIINAXINT  
HESQUIAHT  
HUPACASATH

HUU-AY-AHT  
KA:YU:K'T'H'/CHE:K:TLES7ET'H'  
MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT  
NUCHATLAHT  
TLA-O-QUI-AHT

TOQUAHT  
TSESHAHT  
UCHUCKLESAHT  
YUUE.UʔIŁ.ʔATH

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## **Nuu-chah-nulth Urges BC To Include All First Nations People As Priority In Vaccine Roll-out: Off-Reserve**

March 16, 2021

**Port Alberni, BC-** On March 11, 2021, Canada marked the one-year anniversary of COVID-19 being declared a global pandemic. Over this year, our Nuu-chah-nulth-aht have experienced tragic loss despite valiant efforts by leadership to mitigate the risks to their community members. We take this time to acknowledge every loss and every person who grieves those sad losses.

We know that one of the keys to preventing COVID-19 among First Nation people is to have the vaccine and we appreciate the prioritization of the vaccine roll out to our rural and remote communities. Unfortunately, this has not included our members living away from home. NTC has been advocating for vaccines for all our people living away from home as a priority. Currently, there is no priority for our members living away from home other than elders 65 and older.

[Recently](#), Shannon McDonald, acting Chief Medical Officer at the First Nation Health Authority said she is hopeful all Indigenous adults in the province who don't live on reserves, will be offered the vaccine in the second phase of the immunization program and that active planning is underway to expand the eligibility to more indigenous adults who live away from home. This is good news.

NTC fully supports Dr. McDonald and her efforts to get all our people immunized regardless of their residence. We encourage Provincial Health Officer and BC Health to work with First Nations Health Authority to ensure all indigenous adults are vaccinated.

President Judith Sayers states "The NTC appreciates that the BC government has prioritized First Nations communities to get the vaccine. What we cannot agree with is their lack of understanding that our Nations are not to be artificially divided between off and on reserve as that is very archaic and colonial. We are responsible for all our members no matter where they live and do not like to see them being treated differently. We are all connected."

Judith Sayers goes on to say that "our people who live away from home also have the same issues as on reserve, overcrowded homes, lack of trust in the health care, RCMP, and

educational systems due to racism, underlying health conditions, lack of ability to respond to an outbreak and they too must be immunized.”

Vice-President Mariah Charleson adds “Knowing the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has prioritized First Nations individuals to receive the vaccination is not only following science but is completing the government’s objective to protect our most vulnerable people from this deadly virus. BC must follow-suit and ensure this is done in a way that prioritized all First Nations individuals regardless if they reside on or off-reserve and regardless of their age.”

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#### About Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council

The Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (NTC) provides programs and services to over 10,000 registered members. The role of the NTC is to represent 14 First Nations in three regions stretching 300 kilometers of the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island from Brooks Peninsula in the north to Point-no-Point in the south. The NTC represents Ahousaht, Ditidaht, Ehattesaht/Chinehkint, Hesquiaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ay- aht, Kyuquot/Checklesah, Mowachaht /Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Tseshaht, Uchucklesaht and Ucluelet First Nations and provides a variety of programs and services to them.

For more information, please visit [www.nuuchahnulth.org](http://www.nuuchahnulth.org).