

February 12, 2021

## **TAHLTAN NATION COVID-19 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Tahltan Nation COVID-19 Emergency Management Team (TNCEMPT) continues to meet regularly to discuss the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its threat to our Territory.

As many of you know, a COVID-19 outbreak has been declared at the Brucejack Mine. The outbreak will stay in place for a minimum of 28 days. Northern Health continues to undertake contact tracing and isolation protocols are in effect. In addition, a formal and intensive public health management system has been put into place. This has resulted in no travel to and from the camp as well as the immediate testing of all 480 individuals onsite.

Prior to the outbreak being declared, Tahltan Leadership wrote a strongly worded letter to Pretivm, the owners of the Brucejack Mine, expressing their concern and displeasure that Pretivm was not working with the Tahltan Nation to ensure the protection and safety of our most vulnerable, our Elders, our families, and our communities, including not following all our recommendations and best practices and therefore unnecessarily putting the project, region, and our communities at greater risk.

Since March, we have worked intensely with all our partners including: the resource development sector, primary care networks, as well as provincial ministries and their respective ministers. We are proud of these partnerships and the best practices the Tahltan Nation have helped co-develop.

The following expectations by the Tahltan Nation and calls for action were communicated to Pretivm (Brucejack):

1. 3/3 rotation schedule: Resume consistent 3/3-week rotation for all crews;
2. Increased Testing: Implement Tahltan standard testing protocols; and,
3. New emergency committee: Establish a Partners Emergency Management Committee.

We have received a positive response from Pretivm (Brucejack) and are meeting with their Leadership group over the weekend. Most importantly, Tahltan Leadership are concerned with those Tahltans directly affected by the outbreak. Here is what we know and the policies now in place:

1. **14 positive COVID-19 cases have been identified onsite, with 41 in isolation,** and positive cases spread offsite.
2. **Tahltan employees onsite and in community:** Those onsite will continue to be paid while in lockdown and where relevant, receive overtime. Those who are not able to be on shift will receive 75% of their wages. We have been told this information has been communicated to workers. Brucejack, the Tahltan EMC, and communities are working together to properly determine the workers, and their families, who may need support at this time and what isolation periods will be.
3. **Tahltan employees of Brucejack who have returned to one of our communities in the last 14 days are required to self-isolate effective immediately for 14 days from their day of departure, to monitor for symptoms, and stay within your household.** This means you must not go to public places or visit anybody outside of your household. Remember to wear a mask, hand sanitize, and social distance. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your local EMC Lead. You can still go for walks with your family, go sledding, sliding, fishing, hunting, and be outside but only within your bubble.

Your local EMC team has assembled a shopping team for you to utilize. They will help shop for you during your self-isolation period and can assist with checking your mail. Please make a list of your needs and give your completed card to them. They will drop what you need off at your home completely contactless.

4. **Tahltan employees of Brucejack who are in lockdown awaiting a COVID-19 test: Once you receive a negative test onsite and return to one of your communities, you too will be required to self-isolate effective immediately for 14 days. Monitor for symptoms and stay within your household.** This means you do not go to public places, or visit anybody out of your household. Remember to wear a mask, hand sanitize, and social distance. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your local EMC Lead.

#### **WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER:**

The outbreak at Brucejack has put our communities in clear and present danger.

Many of our fellow brothers and sisters who work at Brucejack have done nothing wrong. They have been following all health orders, have worn their masks, and have done everything that has been asked of them.

Those who left camp and returned to their families in the last two weeks are having to go into 14-day isolation. Some of our brothers and sisters are in locked down at Brucejack, unable to leave camp and return to their families until they receive a negative COVID-19 test. Upon return home, they too will be required to go into a 14-day isolation period.

This is the time we rally together as Tahltans. Our fellow Tahltans and their families who work at Brucejack require our love, kindness, and support. Each one of us needs to know they are safe and cared for. Targeting, stigma, and shaming of any family affected by the outbreak at Brucejack will not be tolerated. What will be tolerated is Tahltans coming together and supporting each other through this very stressful time for all connected to this site.

#### **OUR COVID-19 POLICIES AND REGULATIONS:**

Everyone returning to Territory after essential travel is required to self-isolate for 14 days.

Essential travel only to and from Tahltan Territory.

Stay within your core bubble. Your core bubble is your immediate household and does not include extended family who does not live with you.

#### **COVID-19 TESTING:**

To minimize community spread of COVID-19, if you have symptoms please contact the nearest health centre at once.

COVID-19 tests are available at every health centre. Call the health centre and request a test if you experience any symptoms.

ENDS