It has been six (6) months since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Below is a brief update for members on some of the steps taken by Cowichan Tribes to respond to the pandemic.

Thank you to everyone doing their part to keep COVID out of our community!

Key Highlights
* Pandemic Response Team and Plan activated on March 11.
* All departments moved to essential services and modified their operations to serve members online or at a distance.
* Weekly meetings of Chief and Council until summer.
* Economic response: Cowichan Tribes matched government funding with $1.1 million of its own revenue to ensure all members - including those off-reserve - could access programs and funding (Federal funding is still based on a colonial formula limited to members living on-reserve).

341 Chromebook laptops have been distributed to Cowichan Tribes families for K-12 students. 39 post-secondary students accessed $500 funding for laptops. Undertook renovations over the summer to ensure safe re-opening of the daycare and schools.

$460,500 in COVID-19 response funding distributed to members on and off-reserve as of Sept 23. Developed custom software module to roll-out funding.

COVID-19 Community Navigator positions created using existing staff to answer questions and help member access programs. Over 450 calls and 250 emails received since May 11.

800 homes received traditional Food Fish, including:
- 4,000 lbs of Salmon
- 800 lbs of Elk
- 1,200 lbs of Cod

Traditional food harvesting is continuing
Large portion of workforce transitioned to working remotely. Developed and implemented COVID-19 policy with safety training and protective measures in all buildings. Working with big house and church leaders to ensure safety of community during cultural practices and ceremonies.

Providing essential services during the pandemic, including recycling, garbage, security, and income assistance. Since March 17 the Housing department responded to 618 service requests. Ts’ewulhtun nurses performed 147 immunizations since May. Parents are encouraged to bring children for immunizations - it is safe. Ts’ewulhtun (250) 746-6184.

Other Highlights
* Installed multiple billboards and signs across the community
* Passed the COVID-19 Community Protection Bylaw
* Set-up temporary site for vulnerable members at the Mound in collaboration with the Cowichan Housing Association
* All departments developed safety plans to ensure essential services can continue safely in accordance with WorkSafe BC
* Started E-newsletter email distribution
* Launched Opioid Crisis Response Task Force to address overdoses
* Held KEEP COVID OUT Social Media contest (posters & prizes)

Food deliveries for Elders and members in need for the past 20 weeks. Over 825 households received COVID-19 food support. A total of 2,682 food hampers distributed to date.

22 videos produced for COVID-19 and Opioid Response from Ts’ewulhtun Health nurses, Elders, Chief, Councillors, General Manager, and community members including youth. Videos on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgd_Y_GI-xLNTQIn0X-Vugw

Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/user118479272

We continue to monitor the pandemic and review services including those for Elders to determine which services can re-start - more info coming soon!

For the latest information on our COVID-19 response please visit www.cowichantribes.com and follow us on Facebook