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Emergency Control Group Supports Elected Council's Decision to Remain in Phase Two of Recovery Plan

Six Nations of the Grand River's Emergency Control Group (ECG) is expressing their support for Elected Council's decision **to remain in Phase 2 of the community's recovery plan.**

Both groups acknowledge the growing numbers of cases across Ontario, Canada, and the United States as contributing factors in this decision.

"We have been witnessing just how devastating COVID-19 can be on First Nations and racialized communities south of the border," says Elected Chief Mark Hill. "And in most Canadian provinces, we have witnessed that continuing along the path of recovery essentially guarantees at least a small increase in COVID-19 cases. Unlike municipalities our health services and supports are fewer and we have underlying factors that already increase our risk of spread – which means this is a risk we cannot take at this time."

The ECG points to several factors that put First Nations and racialized communities at an increased risk of contracting, spreading, and suffering from the effects of viruses and infections, including:

- Overcrowded and multi-family homes that serve as optimal sites for the spread of germs and viruses;
- Limited access to the clean water that is needed for maintaining health and keeping homes and bodies clean and disinfected;
- Limited access to quality and properly-funded healthcare;
- Food insecurity and limited access to the nutritious foods that create healthy bodies and immune systems able to properly fight viruses and illnesses, and;
- Higher rates of pre-existing illnesses that make people more susceptible to the threat of additional illnesses and infections.

"ECG continues to monitor our pandemic response and is confident that we are in a good position within our Recovery Plan. However, we must remain committed to the plan and reduce any risks to increased exposures and spread of the virus. We must consistently consider all factors in our healthy pandemic response," says Director of Health Services Lori Davis Hill.

Six Nations Director of Health, Davis Hill, continues to encourage the community to exercise caution and to avoid situations that will increase their risk to exposure, which in turn may result in public health staff and other frontline workers overwhelmed and supports exhausted.

ECG as a whole is echoing those calls and encouraging the entire community to find responsible ways to relax and gather strength in Six Nations of the Grand River's continued state of Community Emergency.

Ongoing public health and safety measures currently in place under Six Nation's second phase include:

- A limit of 10 people for outside gatherings;
- Practicing physical distancing in public places;
- Wearing a mask while in public spaces, especially in indoor settings and when physical distance cannot be maintained;
- Staying at home if feeling ill or experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, lost of taste or fever)
- Maintaining clean and disinfected physical surroundings;
Frequent hand washing for at least 20 seconds and/or regular use of disinfecting your hands disinfecting your hands.

Public health officials are also reminding community members of their responsibility when it comes to contact-tracing, a tool that continues to prove extremely effective in finding and containing the COVID-19 virus, but only when an infected person can list the people they have been in contact with over the past 14 days.

Mandatory 14-day self-isolation is required for anyone that has travelled outside of the Country, and must report his or her return from travel to Ohsweken Public Health at 519-445-2672.

"If you cannot list all of the people you have come into contact with over the past two weeks, you are overdoing it and should consider limiting your interactions and visits with others," says Davis Hill.

If you or somebody you know is experiencing any symptoms, please contact the COVID-19 Information and Assessment centre at 226-446-9909 OR 1-855-977-7737 to arrange for a free test.

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