



LITTLE RED RIVER CREE NATION

January 25th, 2021

Re: New Variants of COVID-19

To Nation Residents and Members,

You may have seen reports of “new variants” of the COVID-19 virus in the media over the last month. A variant is basically a new strain of a virus that might make it act differently. New variants are caused by mutations in the virus’ DNA. Most mutations do not change the virus enough to be of any concern.

But recently there have been 3 variants of concern in the world; The UK variant, the South African variant and the Brazilian variant. **These variants are more easily spread between people than the original COVID-19 virus, about 30-50% higher rates of spread.** They have already been found in Canada and their spread is being monitored by Public Health.

Alberta Health announced today they found the first case of community spread of the UK variant. This is deeply concerning because the more people who get infected, the more hospitalizations and deaths we will see.

According to the modelling if the UK variant spreads unchecked in Alberta we will see:

- Almost 5 times as many COVID-19 infections
- 3x as many hospitalizations
- 4x as many ICU admissions

What can we do?

- Continue with all current public health measures (do not visit, wear masks in public, sanitize hands and high touch surfaces often, stay home when sick and get tested, etc.)
- **GET VACCINATED. The vaccines still work against the new variants. The companies who are making the vaccines are researching how they might tweak the vaccines to make them even more effective.**

Thank you,

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