



CARRIER SEKANI
FAMILY SERVICES

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“Cousins before COVID” - Carrier Sekani Family Services launches vaccination campaign

November 02, 2021

For immediate release

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Prince George, November 2, 2021: Today, in coordination with the 11 Member Nations we serve, Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) is launching a vaccine hesitancy campaign. The campaign will run until December 17, and will focus on the Carrier and Sekani cultural values of placing the needs of the larger group over the needs of the individual, encouraging an increased uptake of vaccines within community members—especially younger Nation members.

“We cannot deny that COVID rates have increased throughout the region,” explains Warner Adam, Chief Executive Officer of Carrier Sekani Family Services. “With the fourth wave and variants of the virus threatening the lives of our community members, especially those most vulnerable, we felt the need to speak up to our members about the values we all hold dear, and act to support those who are still unvaccinated. This campaign will put the values of our community at the forefront of the messaging, but will also provide direct access to trusted information and put supports in place to make getting vaccinated easier for community members.”

Current provincial data shows that Indigenous people are vaccinated at a much lower rate than non-Indigenous populations, with Indigenous youth aged 17-40 in the least vaccinated age range.

The campaign focuses on three pillars: building trust, caring for community and supporting access. It acknowledges the resistance that Indigenous people might have to the vaccine due to a history of medical racism and government infringement on Indigenous rights and title. To cut through the mass of information regarding the pandemic, and build trust in the content, CSFS is supported by the First Nations Health Authority and Northern Health on a series of trusted fact sheets to support learning and understanding about the virus and vaccine.

The third pillar also touches on vaccine hesitancy research that highlights how many unvaccinated people have the intention to get vaccinated but postpone it due to access or other barriers. To support, CSFS is improving access in communities with vaccine clinic information, transportation, and reminders for the duration of the campaign.

The public side of the campaign is about caring for community over the needs of the individual. ‘Cousins before COVID’ highlights the interconnectedness of the Carrier and Sekani people, and how community members are truly family.

“As Carrier and Sekani people, everyone you meet in the community is connected, related by blood or by a connection we share; a sibling, cousin, an Auntie, or Uncle,” explains CSFS Board President, Corrina Leween. “You consider people your family—and you look out for your family. Historically, to survive, we’ve placed the needs of the larger group over the needs of the individual, and that’s how we’re going to get through COVID together.”

The campaign will run from November 2 - December 17, 2021, across all 11 Carrier and Sekani Nations and will include videos, posters, and a social media campaign where those who are vaccinated can win prizes as an incentive to share why #CousinsbeforeCOVID is important to them.

For more information, visit: www.csfs.org/covid

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