



World No Tobacco Day Edition
2020

NITHA HEALTH EXPRESS



Cover Photo: Youth from Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation showcasing traditional tobacco. More on traditional tobacco on page 2

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MESSAGE FROM TARA CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tansi, Edlanet'e from the management and staff at NITHA. This edition of the NITHA Health Express is focussed on Commercial Tobacco. NITHA has been involved in the Federal Tobacco Project since 2014, when it was identified that commercial tobacco was and continues to be a challenge in our communities. As May 31st marked "World No Tobacco Day", we embrace this year's theme, 'Protecting our Youth from the manipulation of the tobacco industry and preventing them from tobacco and nicotine use'. NITHA's focus will continue to be on protecting sacred tobacco use while providing education to promote cessation. This issue will explore

commercial tobacco and the dangers of vaping. We will also provide highlights of the Youth Conference that the NITHA Tobacco Project hosted, in March, to educate youth on sacred and commercial tobacco uses. We hope this information is valuable to you.

As the world contends with COVID-19, NITHA continues to work diligently with our Partners on providing third level support to the Partnership in the prevention of COVID-19 in communities. Although our offices are closed to the public, we continue to remain open for business; the overall health and safety of all staff and community members remain a top priority. As such, NITHA has been involved in the procurement and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers in the communities. While PPE remains a challenge, we strive to continue working towards improvements to the overall accessibility and procurement process. These improvements will not only be beneficial for our communities, but also strengthen our relationships with the various levels of government. As the pandemic evolves around the globe, we will continue to research and provide the latest information on COVID-19 for communities to make informed decisions. At the end of the day, the community leaders make the decisions on a community's direction. Although it is unclear how long we will be working in the context of COVID-19, we will continue to follow the Public Health measures and do our part in flattening the curve.

Our next edition will focus specifically on COVID-19 and its impact. We will be providing tips and information on emerging issues related to the pandemic.

For the latest information on COVID-19 and how to keep your family safe, follow NITHA on Facebook and check out our website www.nitha.com for recent information and resources on COVID-19.

TOBACCO IS SACRED; KEEP IT SACRED

Traditional Tobacco is a plant given to the Indigenous People by Creator. It is grown and harvested for ceremonial and medicinal purposes. Traditional Tobacco has been a very important part of Indigenous People's Culture in most Indigenous Communities in Canada. Traditionally, tobacco is smoked in a pipe during prayer and while communicating with the grandfather and grandmother spirits. It is also used as an offering to Mother Earth during ceremonies and offered to Elders as a sign of respect.

When used traditionally, tobacco use promotes spirituality, good health, cleansing, and wisdom, healing, dignity, morals and values. For these reasons, the tobacco plant should be treated with

great respect and honour.

Traditional use has been corrupted by recreational use (commercial tobacco) which abuses the sacred gift (traditional tobacco) given to and held sacred by Indigenous People.

DON'T BE A STATISTIC! COMMERCIAL TOBACCO KILLS

Tobacco used for recreational use includes regular cigarette smoking, smoking of cigars, cigarillos, cigarillos, pipe, e-cigarettes, snuff, and chewing tobacco. These uses are not for sacred or medicinal purposes and is



abuse of the tobacco plant. Non-traditional use causes serious health problems. Commercial tobacco contains about 7000 poisonous chemicals of which 70 are cancer causing. These include tar, carbon monoxide, nicotine; chemicals used in household cleaner, pesticides, batteries, glue, resin, gasoline and other products you would not ingest.

Tobacco contains nicotine which is the addictive substance that gets people hooked. Once you try smoking, you can get hooked. So many young people got hooked to commercial tobacco on their first try.

Smokeless tobacco: chewing or spitting tobacco is not safe. Chew tobacco contains 3000 chemicals of which 28 cause cancer of the mouth, lips and throat; gum diseases and stomach ulcers.

COMMERCIAL TOBACCO BURNS HOLES IN YOUR POCKETS

Would you like to save some money? Are you a smoker? Below is a breakdown of costs, daily, weekly, monthly and yearly as it relates to smoking 12 cigarettes per day.

Money spent on cigarettes	Money spent in 1 week	Amount spent in 1 month	Amount spent in 1 year
\$5	\$35	\$152	\$1,820
\$10	\$70	\$303	\$3,640
\$15	\$105	\$455	\$5,460

SAY NO TO VAPING

For the first time in three decades, the epidemic of youth vaping in Canada has coincided with an increase in youth and adolescent smoking rates.

Although vaping is likely a less harmful mode of nicotine delivery than that of cigarettes, a study showed "long-term exposure to e-cigarette vapour might cause nicotine dependence and increase the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular health effects."

As well, e-cigarettes are not safe. In order to use them, one must load it with vaporizable liquid (made up of a number of chemicals which include

propylene glycol, glycerol, nicotine and flavoring substances) and apply electricity, 'heating the liquid until it vaporizes'. At the heating temperature, the chemicals inside the fluid undergo a breakdown process and are further converted into other chemicals. Research shows that the real danger is the changes that occur when these chemical compounds are heated.

NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN BREATHE EASY YOUTH CONFERENCE

Before COVID-19 officially became a pandemic, the Northern Saskatchewan Breathe Easy hosted a north wide Youth Conference on March 11th and 12th, 2020. The youth conference was geared at using youth as the mediums for change in the fight against commercial tobacco. The youth learnt about:

- The differences between commercial and traditional tobacco
- The health benefits of living a smoke free lifestyle
- The health effects of vaping
- The effects of co-using commercial tobacco and cannabis

Approximately 180 youth from the NITHA Partnership attended the conference. 95% of the attendees were satisfied with the conference topics and presenters. In addition to tobacco knowledge, the conference provided some traditional land based practises, such as Teepee raising, as well as, entertainment for youth which included traditional dancers, a musical band and some activity sessions.

Based on the youth suggestions, future plans will



Youth posing for a picture during one of the sessions at the youth conference.

include more traditional practices as they relate to Indigenous youth. In addition, the Northern Saskatchewan Breathe Easy will look into ways to partner with other programs addressing substance abuse in youth.

**BE MINDFUL, BE
PRAYERFUL, KEEP
TOBACCO SACRED!**

COMMERCIAL TOBACCO AND COVID-19



Bringing your hands to your mouth
can transfer the virus into your body

**Smoking can increase your
chances of getting COVID-19**



Sharing tobacco products
such as waterpipes can transmit
the virus between people

#coronavirus #COVID19

WORRIED ABOUT THE CORONA VIRUS?

Here are some tips to protect yourself and others from getting sick or from spreading illnesses like coronavirus, influenza or respiratory infections:

1. Practice good hygiene—Wash your hands regularly with soap and water;
2. Practice proper cough and sneezing etiquette (into the bend of your elbow);
3. Avoid close contact with other people who are sick;
4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
5. Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces;
6. Ensure your immunizations are up to date for protection against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Is there a topic you would like covered in one of our newsletter editions? We would like to hear from you.

For more information about events, stories and health information covered in this newsletter please call 306-953-5000, visit us at www.nitha.com or follow us on social media @

Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority.

