*2634 6th Line R.R.# 2 Ohsweken, ON N0A 1M0*

March 2, 2021

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Sgę́:no: Swagwé:goh,

We have met safely through the internet because of the alarming amount of people that have contracted the Covid-19 virus within our community.

Our people’s safety is of the utmost importance. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted our community for a year. We know that isolation affects the minds and the lockdown measures that have been put in place have been very hard on individuals, families, and the community as a whole. We also have seen the hardships people have had to endure and continue to endure as part of this Global Pandemic.

This past year the ceremonies were being put through without any instances of Covid-19. During the Midwinter Ceremonies at Six Nations we have seen numerous cases reported even with many precautions in place. We are encouraging anyone that attended the most recent Midwinter ceremonies or been in contact with someone who has, to reach out to the Covid-19 assessment centre for guidance.

We want to thank the individuals that have carried on our ceremonies up to this point in time. Maintaining the wellness and sovereignty of our community through our traditional practices. We recognize that the level of stress on these individuals has been tremendous. We also, need to think of their well-being moving forward and we are now temporarily removing that responsibility until we have fully passed through this pandemic. That means, we leave it to the individual Longhouses how to proceed without gathering a crowd to conduct ceremonies.

The other sources of outbreaks are gatherings, even small gatherings can lead to high community transmission. We have witnessed first-hand how powerful and contagious the virus really is. We are encouraging everyone to stay within your own household except for essential purposes. We cannot stress enough how important it is to curb the spread of this virus.

In our teachings, our values as Ogweho:weh people instruct us to help one another. We are calling on our community to support each other with kindness. Do not blame or shame someone that has contracted the virus. That negativity may lead to more stress on individuals who are already trying to deal with the impacts of the virus. Positivity can go a long way and simply reaching out with Covid precautions in place, can uplift someone. Be there for each other, care for one another and we will get through this as a strong Haudenosaunee community.

Please refer back to our previous statements for all the advised activities you are able to do while managing all the restrictions.

It is of great sadness that this virus has taken lives and we offer heartfelt condolences to the families who have experienced losses of loved ones.

In Peace and friendship,

The Chiefs and Clanmothers of the HCCC