

March 11, 2021

Dear Tribal Leaders, Public Health Officials, and Indian Country Professionals:

This week, the [CDC issued](#) its first set of [recommendations on activities that people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19](#) can safely resume. The new guidance—which [is based on the latest science](#) — includes recommendations for how and when a fully vaccinated individual can visit with other people who are fully vaccinated and with other people who are not vaccinated. This guidance represents a first step toward returning to everyday activities in our communities. CDC will update these recommendations as more people are vaccinated, rates of COVID-19 in the community change, and additional scientific evidence becomes available. CDC has [released resources](#) to help people make informed decisions when they are fully vaccinated.

HHS Tribal Consultation Updates

Tribal Consultation on Presidential Memorandum: On March 2nd, [HHS initiated Tribal Consultation](#) on President Biden’s [Presidential Memorandum](#) on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening the Nation-to-Nation Relationship. HHS is seeking recommendations and feedback on how the Department can improve its policies, and practices to better engage with Indian Country through meaningful consultation. Tribes can provide their recommendations and feedback through several [regional](#) listening sessions listed below or by providing written feedback to consultation@hhs.gov by **March 26th**.

- **Monday, March 22, 2021** (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. ET): [Register for Regions 1, 2, 3, & 4](#)
- **Monday, March 22, 2021** (2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET): [Register for Region 5](#)
- **Tuesday, March 23, 2021** (2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET): [Register for Regions 7 & 8](#)
- **Wednesday, March 24, 2021** (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. ET): [Register for Region 6](#)
- **Wednesday, March 24, 2021** (2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET): [Register for Region 9](#)
- **Thursday, March 25, 2021** (2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET): [Register for Region 10](#)

Annual Tribal Budget Consultation: On March 8th, [HHS announced](#) the upcoming date for its [Annual Tribal Budget Consultation \(ATBC\)](#). This year’s ATBC will be held virtually using the ZoomGov platform. The ATBC will provide a forum for tribes to collectively share their views and priorities with HHS officials on national health and human services funding priorities and make recommendations for the Department’s FY 2023 budget request. The HHS will host [several 1-hour planning sessions](#) for the consultation starting on Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 1:00 PM ET. Written Testimony should be submitted by **Wednesday, April 7, 2021**. Testimony can be emailed to consultation@hhs.gov. The consultation record will remain open for 30 days after the virtual session wherein additional testimony will also be accepted.

HHS Departmental Updates

Additional Biden-Harris Administration HHS Staff Appointments: Last week, HHS announced additional Biden-Harris [Administration appointments](#), building on an experienced team committed to President Biden’s mission to end the COVID-19 pandemic, expand affordable health care, and advance equity.

IHS Update: On March 8th, IHS Initiated [Tribal consultation](#) and [Urban confer](#) on the potential allocation of \$6 billion currently under consideration by Congress as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. And last week, the Indian Health Service and [Oklahoma City Indian Clinic](#) partnered to hold a media event in Oklahoma City to answer questions on IHS COVID-19 vaccine administration efforts across the Indian health system and throughout Oklahoma. During the event, Acting Director Liz Fowler announced that IHS is aiming to reach a new goal of 1 million COVID-19 vaccines administered by the end of March.

OMH Update: The Office of Minority Health (OMH) is [seeking input](#) from Federally-recognized Indian Tribes/American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Tribes, Tribal organizations, Tribal-serving organizations, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and AI/AN—serving institutions of higher education to guide the development of a new Center for Indigenous Innovation and Health Equity (Center). The purpose of this initiative is to create a Center for Indigenous Innovation and Health Equity (Center) to provide services for American Indian and Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations that draws on deeply-rooted indigenous values and practices. Comments are due March 14th.

CDC Update: At the request of tribal leaders, federal partners developed this Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) fact sheet to help guide [tribes with funeral and burial health and safety](#). This fact sheet also helps tribes plan for an increase in deaths within a community. Tribes and families practice unique traditions and refer to death in varying ways as they honor those who have passed on. We share this public health guidance with sincere respect for those traditions.

FDA Update: The FDA has updated its COVID-19 Response [At-A-Glance Summary](#), which provides a quick look at facts, figures and highlights on the FDA's response efforts.

Vaccine Updates

Vaccine Allocation Transfer and Redistribution Guidance for I/T/U Programs: [New guidance](#) outlines two methods to transfer vaccines to IHS-operated facilities and facilities operated by Tribal Health Program and Urban Indian Organization (I/T/U) participating in the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program coordinated through IHS. The transfer of vaccines under these two methods eliminates the need for Tribal Health Programs and Urban Indian Organizations to sign separate CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Provider Agreements through a state/local jurisdiction.

Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine: The FDA issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) for [the third vaccine for the prevention of coronavirus disease 2019](#) (COVID-19) caused by severe acute

respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The EUA allows the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine to be distributed in the U.S for use in individuals 18 years of age and older.

Procurement of 100 Million Additional Johnson & Johnson Vaccines: President Biden hosted an event with the [CEO's of Johnson & Johnson and Merck discussing their historic collaboration to produce more COVID-19 vaccines](#). Through this partnership and the support of the Biden Administration, the Administration will be able to procure 100 million Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines. During the event, President Biden emphasized ensuring everyone is treated with equity and those most impacted get the care they deserve and the importance of vaccinating Americans to beat the pandemic, get our economy back on track and for everyone to get back their lives.

Manufacturing Collaboration Between Merck and Johnson & Johnson to Expand Production of COVID-19 Vaccines: President Biden [announced last week](#) that his Administration has helped forge a historic [manufacturing collaboration between two of the largest U.S. health care and pharmaceutical companies, Merck and Johnson & Johnson \(J&J\)](#), to expand production of J&J's COVID-19 vaccine. The collaboration will increase manufacture of vaccine drug substance, as well as its fill-finish capacity – two of the biggest bottlenecks facing J&J in the production of its vaccine. These efforts will contribute to J&J's ability to accelerate delivery of their vaccine doses from 100 million doses by the end of June to at or near 100 million doses by the end of May.

ACF and CDC Early Childhood Vaccine Priority Stakeholder Webinar: The Administration for Children and Families is co-hosting a [stakeholder webinar](#) with CDC on Friday, March 12, 2021 from 1-2pm eastern. The purpose of this webinar is to provide more detailed information about the initiative to vaccinate early childhood educators, CDC's Federal Retail Pharmacy program, and resources available to help you with outreach to your child care and early childhood provider communities. During this webinar, stakeholders will have a chance to hear more about this effort from ACF and CDC leaders and address any initial questions that you and your partners and constituents might have about this initiative. You can register for the webinar at the link: https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_v8sr3LMTT4GPUncAMNpMA.

Different Vaccines: CDC updated their resource page on the [different types of COVID-19 vaccines](#). You can find resources on the currently authorized and recommended vaccines, vaccine types, and more.

What to Expect at Your Vaccine Appointment: Because COVID-19 is a new disease with new vaccines, you may [have questions about what happens before, during, and after your appointment to get vaccinated](#). These tips will help you know what to expect when you get vaccinated, what information your provider will give you, and resources you can use to monitor your health after you are vaccinated.

Possible Vaccine Side Effects: COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you from getting COVID-19. You may have some [side effects](#), which are normal signs that your body is building

protection. These side effects may affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Some people have no side effects.

Vaccines and People with Allergies: CDC updated their resources and information for [people with allergies](#). If you have had a severe allergic reaction or an immediate allergic reaction—even if it was not severe—to any ingredient in an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, you should not get either of the currently available mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna). If you have had a severe allergic reaction or an immediate allergic reaction to any ingredient in Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen (J&J/Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine, you should not get the J&J/Janssen vaccine.

Vaccinations for Teachers and Childcare Workers: On March 2nd, HHS issued a directive that all states immediately make [eligible teachers, school staff, and childcare workers for COVID-19 vaccination](#) across all vaccination providers. Additionally, pharmacy locations that are part of CDC’s Federal Retail Pharmacy Program are now giving priority to school staff and child care workers for COVID-19 vaccination during the month of March. In addition to existing state and local COVID-19 vaccination sites, teachers and staff in pre-Kindergarten to grade 12 (pre-K–12 schools) and childcare workers will be able to sign up for an appointment at more than 9,000 participating pharmacy locations nationwide.

Vaccination Toolkits: CDC updated their page with [vaccination toolkits](#). Get audience-specific toolkits for healthcare teams and community administrators.

Contact Tracing

Contact Tracing Steps: CDC updated their page with infographics on [steps for contact tracing](#). Find out what you can expect to happen during contact tracing. View [contact tracing communications toolkit](#).

Notification of Exposure: A successful [notification of exposure](#) allows for an exchange of information with the person (contact) exposed to COVID-19 and offers an opportunity to answer questions and provide referrals for testing, medical evaluation and other necessary support services. The goals of this interaction are to inform the person that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, assess their medical condition and other risk factors, and gather information for continued monitoring and support.

Research

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in COVID-19 Incidence: CDC released an MMWR on [racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 incidence by age, sex, and period in 16 US jurisdictions](#). Racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 incidence among persons aged <25 years in 16 U.S. jurisdictions evolved during the pandemic. Disparities were substantial during January–April and generally decreased during May–December, largely because of a greater increase in incidence among White persons, rather than a decline among racial and ethnic minority groups. The largest persistent disparities involved Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, American Indian

or Alaska Native, and Hispanic persons. Ensuring equitable and timely access to preventive measures, including testing, safe work and education settings, and vaccination when eligible is important to address racial/ethnic disparities.

Resources

- [SAMHSA Mental Health Training and technical assistance resources](#)
- [CDC Updated Staffing resources](#)
- [CDC Updated information for healthcare facilities that may be experiencing staffing shortages](#)
- [CDC Updated Guidance for clinical mitigation](#)
- [CDC Updated Communications toolkits](#)
- [CDC Updated Resources for workplaces and businesses.](#)
- [CDC Information for assessment of risk and application of work restrictions](#)
- [CDC Updated Resources for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding](#)
- [CDC Updated Information for COVID-19 in children and teens](#)
- [CDC Updated Guidance for businesses and employers](#)
- [CDC Updated Guidance for Multifamily housing](#)
- [CDC Updated Guidance on management of contacts of people with COVID-19](#)
- [CDC Updated Guidance on Events and gatherings](#)
- [CDC Updated Guidance for Nursing Home Visitation](#)
- [CDC Information for people with disabilities](#)

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions!

Tribal Affairs Team

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