

July 9, 2021

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

Last week, [Secretary Becerra](#) made his first official visit to a tribal nation, visiting the Cherokee Nation and celebrating [Oklahoma's recently enacted Medicaid Expansion](#). Secretary Becerra was accompanied by [CMS Administrator Brooks-LaSure](#) and [IHS Acting Director Fowler](#). They met with Cherokee Nation leaders, along with other tribal, state, and federal leaders, and Cherokee citizens who will benefit from the expansion. The Secretary also discussed the Cherokee Nation's COVID-19 vaccination efforts, the tribe's partnership with the Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences to establish the first tribally affiliated college of medicine, and toured the Cherokee Nation's new outpatient health center.



HHS Tribal Consultation Updates

HHS Annual Regional Tribal Consultations: This summer, HHS will continue to hold [HHS Regional](#) Tribal Consultation Sessions. These sessions provide Tribes opportunities to focus on regional specific issues with their respective regional HHS counterparts, and also provides an opportunity for Tribal Leaders to consult with HHS headquarters leadership on issues at the national level. The schedule and registration links are below:

- July 21 – 22, 2021: **Region 5**
<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltduurzgiGO90M4liEf75OXfau15zLCY>
Contact: Sam Gabuzzi; Sam.Gabuzzi@hhs.gov

- July 27, 2021: **Region 1**
<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlscuugqTIsHnUWRonprwUgGjND0pgUUKU>
 Contact: Paul Jacobsen; Paul.Jacobsen@hhs.gov
- August 9 – 12, 2021: **Region 9**
<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSdOyppjsuGpV6VYabm6lYwGDBaQVQvvY>
 Contact: Schuyler Hall; Schuyler.Hall@hhs.gov

CDC/ATSDR: Is hosting a tribal consultation session on the agency’s tribal consultation policy on Thursday, August 5, from 3:15–4:45 pm (EDT). You can register to attend this consultation session here: <https://cdc.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSfu-ggDgsGD1rTre7HPjbXylF3v5jSp4>.

ACF Head Start: The Office of Head Start (OHS) has scheduled four Tribal Consultation sessions. These one-day sessions will be held between U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and OHS leadership and the leadership of tribal governments operating Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The purpose of these consultation sessions is to discuss ways to better meet the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) children and their families, taking into consideration funding allocations, distribution formulas, and other issues affecting the delivery of Head Start services in their geographic locations. The dates of the virtual sessions are included below;

- Geographic Regions 6–8: Wednesday, Aug. 18, 2021, 1–4 p.m. ET
- Geographic Regions 9–10: Tuesday, Sept. 21, 2021, 2–5 p.m. ET
- National: Monday, Nov. 15, 2021, 1–4 p.m. ET

Additional information can be found on the [ELCKC website](#). To register, click here: <https://cvent.me/5x94xk>

Departmental Updates

Readout of the Fifth COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force Meeting: HHS [released the readout of the fifth COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force meeting](#). The meeting was designed by COVID-19 Health Equity Chair Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith to consider interim recommendations addressing the inequities and the impact of long-COVID or Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC), and access to personal protective equipment (PPE), testing and therapeutics. Task Force Members discussed and voted favorably on interim recommendations.

CDC Update: The CDC/ATSDR Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC) is currently recruiting delegates for multiple areas. CDC is accepting nominations for Bemidji, Billings, Nashville, Portland, and Tucson areas until **July 22, 2021** and nominations for Albuquerque area, Navajo area, and (3) Tribes At-Large until **August 15, 2021**. For additional guidance please click here <https://www.cdc.gov/tribal/consultation-support/tac/>.

The 22nd Biannual CDC/ATSDR Tribal Advisory Committee Meeting will be **August 4-5, 2021**. The meeting will be held virtually through Zoom. To register for the CDC/ATSDR TAC Meeting, please use our [registration form](#). The agenda will be available on the CDC Tribal Health website in early summer at www.cdc.gov/tribal.

IHS Update: The IHS continues to work tirelessly to ensure the safety of patients and staff, as well as tribal community members. To date, over 1.7 million vaccine doses have been distributed to 352 IHS-operated, tribal health programs, and urban Indian organizations across the health care system. In addition, over 1.4 million vaccine doses have been administered to patients, staff, and tribal community members. Over 55 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native adult patients have received at least one vaccine dose.

The CDC designated Delta as a variant of concern due to the risk it may carry of more severe illness and transmissibility. Unvaccinated individuals or partially-vaccinated individuals are at the highest risk. Fully-vaccinated individuals are substantially protected from severe infection resulting from the delta variant. This is one of the many reasons it is so important to get vaccinated. If you have not already received your vaccine, the IHS asks that you do so as soon as possible. The authorized vaccines are safe and effective, and easy to access throughout the country.

Vaccines

Native America Calling: *Native America Calling*, a national call-in show serving Native America, [released an episode featuring HIS COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force Safety and Monitoring Team Lead Captain Matthew Clark, MD](#), to discuss the COVID-19 variants and staying safe during the pandemic. The Navajo Nation has confirmed its first case of the COVID-19 delta variant. The Southern Ute Tribe in Utah says a variant strain took the life of one of its citizens. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns of a rise in COVID cases as the highly contagious virus starts to take hold.

Vaccination Content for Health Department and Other Public Health Partners: CDC [updated their vaccination content for health departments and other public health partners](#). Health departments and other public health partners can use the content on this page in a variety of formats. It can be customized for newsletters, emails, blogs, magazine articles, or other forms of communication. Health departments can add their logos and customize the text to make it appropriate for their community.

Reported Adverse Events: CDC [updated their information on reported adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination](#). As of July 6, 2021, more than 12.6 million doses of the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine have been given in the United States. CDC and FDA identified 38 confirmed reports of people who got the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine and later developed TTS. To date, two confirmed cases of TTS following mRNA COVID-19 vaccination (Moderna) have been reported to VAERS after more than 318 million doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines administered in the United States. Based on available data, there is not an increased risk for TTS after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination. As of July 6, 2021, VAERS has received 971 reports of myocarditis or pericarditis among people ages 30 and younger who received COVID-19 vaccine. Most cases have been reported after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), particularly in male adolescents and young adults. Through follow-up, including medical record reviews, CDC and FDA have confirmed 594 reports of myocarditis or pericarditis.

Stop the Spread in Children: CDC [updated their information on how to stop the spread of COVID-19 amongst children](#). Specifically, the CDC updated their guidance on when to wear a mask if you are not fully vaccinated. If you are not fully vaccinated and aged 2 or older, you should wear a mask in indoor public places. In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings. In areas with high numbers of COVID-19 cases, consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated. If you are fully vaccinated and have a condition or are taking medications that weaken your immune system, you may need to keep taking steps to protect yourself, like wearing a mask. Talk to your healthcare provider about steps you can take to manage your health and risks.

COVID-19 Vaccine Community Toolkit: CDC [updated their COVID-19 vaccine community toolkit](#). The page contains information on materials to build confidence in vaccinations, regular updates, and promotions of vaccines. The update adds information on showing social support and travel.

COVID-19 Vaccines While Pregnant or Breastfeeding: CDC [updated their information on COVID-19 vaccines for individuals who are pregnant or breastfeeding](#). Specifically, CDC added

information on the J&J/Janssen vaccine, stating that its use in the United States resumed April 23, 2021. However, women younger than 50 years old should especially be aware of the rare risk of blood clots with low platelets after vaccination.

Testing and Treatment

COVID Testing Overview: CDC [updated their overview information regarding testing for COVID-19](#). The update introduces [guidance for fully vaccinated individuals](#) and information for travelling internationally.

Coronavirus Self-Checker: CDC [updated their information on the Coronavirus Self-Checker](#). The Coronavirus Self-Checker is an interactive clinical assessment tool that will assist individuals ages 13 and older, and parents and caregivers of children ages 2 to 12 on deciding when to seek testing or medical care if they suspect they or someone they know has contracted COVID-19 or has come into close contact with someone who has COVID-19. The online, mobile-friendly tool asks a series of questions, and based on the user's responses, provides recommended actions and resources.

Data

Percent of Delivered First Vaccine Doses Administered by U.S. States and Territories: CDC [updated information regarding percentage of COVID-19 first vaccine doses administered](#). As part of the [National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness](#), CDC is committed to making sure that [safe](#), [effective](#) vaccines are distributed and administered as quickly as possible. To help to understand vaccine administration CDC has created a map to show the percentage of first doses of vaccines that have been administered in each jurisdiction from their supply. This information can be used to better understand how states are using their supply to initiate vaccination within their community.

Reporting COVID-19 Vaccination Demographic Data: CDC updated [information on the COVID-19 vaccination demographic data](#) through the COVID Tracker. CDC's COVID Data Tracker provides COVID-19 vaccination data in the United States. Please visit the [About COVID-19 Vaccine Delivered and Administration Data](#) to better understand the IT systems behind the COVID-19 Data Tracker. View data on [Demographic Characteristics of People Receiving COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States](#) and [Demographic Trends of People Receiving COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States](#).

COVID-19 Data Tracker Weekly Review: The CDC [released their COVID-19 data tracker weekly review](#). CDC updated their data on reported cases, SARS-CoV-2 variants, testing, vaccinations, hospitalizations, and deaths. CDC also posted recent CDC COVID-19 publications. The weekly review contained specific analysis on the progress made by the country towards ending the pandemic and the potential threats that still exist.

Research

NIH COVID-19 testing initiative funds additional research projects to safely return children to in-person school: NIH [announced that it is funding five additional projects to identify ways of safely returning students and staff to in-person school in areas with vulnerable and underserved populations](#). The awards are the second installment of the Safe Return to School Diagnostic Testing Initiative, launched earlier this year as part of the NIH Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics Underserved Populations ([RADx-UP](#)) program. The [new awards](#) will provide up to \$15 million over two years for five projects in California, Arizona, Hawaii, Nebraska and Florida. The 8 [initial awards](#), totaling \$33 million over two years, were made in April 2021.

Use of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccine After Reports of Myocarditis Among Vaccine Recipients:

Update from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices: CDC released an *MMWR* on the [use of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine after reports of myocarditis among vaccine recipients](#). This report was released as an *MMWR* Early Release on July 6. An elevated risk for myocarditis among mRNA COVID-19 vaccines has been observed, particularly in males aged 12–29 years. On June 23, 2021, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices concluded that the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination to individual persons and at the population level clearly outweighed the risks of myocarditis after vaccination. Continued use of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in all recommended age groups will prevent morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 that far exceed the number of cases of myocarditis expected. Information regarding the risk for myocarditis with mRNA COVID-19 vaccines should be disseminated to providers to share with vaccine recipients.

Efficacy of Portable Air Cleaners and Masking for Reducing Indoor Exposure to Simulated

Exhaled SARS-CoV-2 Aerosols: CDC released an *MMWR* on the [efficacy of portable air cleaners and masking for reducing indoor exposure to simulated exhaled SARS-CoV-2 aerosols](#). This report was released as an *MMWR* Early Release on July 2. Ventilation systems can be supplemented with portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) cleaners to reduce the number of airborne infectious particles. A simulated infected meeting participant who was exhaling aerosols was placed in a room with two simulated uninfected participants and a simulated uninfected speaker. Using two HEPA air cleaners close to the aerosol source reduced

the aerosol exposure of the uninfected participants and speaker by up to 65%. A combination of HEPA air cleaners and universal masking reduced exposure by up to 90%. Portable HEPA air cleaners can reduce exposure to simulated SARS-CoV-2 aerosols in indoor environments, especially when combined with universal masking.

Symptoms of Depression, Anxiety, PTSD, and Suicidal Ideation Among State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Public Health Workers During COVID-19: CDC released an MMWR on [symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal ideation among state, tribal, local, and territorial public health workers during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) in the United States from March - April, 2021. This report was released as an *MMWR* Early Release on June 28. Increases in mental health conditions have been documented among the general population and health care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic; however, data on public health workers are limited. Among 26,174 surveyed state, tribal, local, and territorial public health workers, 53.0% reported symptoms of at least one mental health condition in the past 2 weeks. Symptoms were more prevalent among those who were unable to take time off or worked ≥ 41 hours per week. Implementing prevention and control practices that eliminate, reduce, and manage factors that cause or contribute to public health workers' poor mental health might improve mental health outcomes during emergencies.

Other Resources

[Updated Guidance for Caregivers in a Non-Healthcare Setting](#)

[Updated Guidance for Pregnant and Recently Pregnant Individuals](#)

[Updated Guidance for Travel to Minimize the Risk of Potential COVID-19 Exposure](#)

[Updated Guidance for Mask-Wearing and Cleaning](#)

[Updated Guidance on Contact Tracing Directives for Health Departments](#)

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

Tribal Affairs Team

Office of the Secretary | Intergovernmental and External Affairs

Department of Health and Human Services