



May 18, 2020

Dear Tribal and Urban Indian Organization Leaders,

At the IHS we value our partnerships with tribes, tribal organizations, and urban Indian health organizations. I am committed to sharing weekly updates on ways we are partnering to combat COVID-19 in Indian Country.

Last Friday, the President announced [Operation Warp Speed \(OWS\)](#), which aims to have substantial quantities of a safe and effective vaccine available by January 2021. In addition to OWS, the President also released a plan to [restructure the Strategic National Stockpile \(SNS\)](#) to ensure a fully stocked, resilient national stockpile, and a domestic industrial base capable of meeting future challenges. As these developments move forward, the IHS will continue to look for ways to leverage these opportunities to fight the coronavirus in Indian Country.

On May 9, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [announced shipments of donated Remdesivir](#) for hospitalized patients with COVID-19. As part of the allocation plan announcement, IHS received Emergency Use Authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to immediately distribute 800 vials of the drug Remdesivir to 14 IHS federal and tribal hospitals across 6 IHS Areas. We expect to receive an additional allocation of 3,200 vials very soon.

The IHS will continue to focus on getting supplies to meet the needs across the Indian health system. I commend the hard work of our [National Supply Service Center](#) in using every avenue available to secure personal protective equipment and supplies. To date, we have delivered more than 35 million gloves and 7 million N95 masks across our health system.

To maximize capacity to treat acutely ill patients, the IHS [expanded telehealth services](#) to conserve supplies and provide access to healthcare services to the people we serve from the privacy of their own homes. On May 14, the [Northern Cheyenne Service Unit](#) in the [Billings Area](#) expanded specialty care services for dermatology, endocrinology, wound management, and rheumatology. These telehealth services allow local providers to refer patients to see

specialists by a virtual clinic appointment. The Billings Area IHS plans to expand tele-specialty services to all its service units by August 2020.

Last week, the IHS released a [Trauma Informed Care Policy](#), which guides IHS in delivering trauma-informed care services and simultaneously prepares our workforces to be trauma informed. We acknowledge the role that trauma plays in the lives of American Indian and Alaska Native populations, specifically Native youth who are 2-and-a-half-times more likely to experience trauma compared to their non-Native peers. Delivering trauma-informed services requires an understanding of the profound effects trauma and violence can have on individuals, families, and communities. Through the use of trauma-informed policies, practices, and interventions, we can enhance our capacity for promoting relational well-being and improve patient outcomes.

This week, on Thursday, May 21 at 3:00 p.m. ET, we invite you to attend a special presentation hosted by the Administration for Native Americans, entitled: “[Trauma: Staying Connected.](#)” The presentation will address the methods through which people can stay connected with each other and cope with trauma in healthy ways.

Thank you for your continued engagement as we address COVID-19 in Indian Country together. We encourage you to visit our [IHS coronavirus webpage](#) for the latest information.

Respectfully,

Michael

RADM Michael D. Weahkee, MBA, MHSA
Assistant Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service
Director, Indian Health Service

Below is general information on various topics that could be of interest to you and your community. Web links are included, where you can find more information on each topic.

Funding Opportunities and Technical Assistance:

- [CDC Noncompetitive Notice of Funding Opportunity \(CDC-RFA-OT20-2004: Supporting Tribal Public Health Capacity in Coronavirus Preparedness and Response\)](#) – **Deadline: May 31** – Every eligible Tribe or Tribal organization that applies is guaranteed funding

under this announcement. This [webpage](#) supports the application. The National Indian Health Board is offering technical assistance for applicants:

- [NIHB Walk Through of CDC RFA-OT20-2004 – May 14 recording](#)
- Friday, May 22 from 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET (register [here](#))
- Tuesday, May 26 from 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET (register [here](#))
- [SAMHSA seeks Applications for \\$40 million in emergency COVID-19 grants](#) for suicide prevention.

Testing/Supplies/Contact Tracing Resources

- [FDA Released Information on Face Masks and Surgical Masks for COVID-19: Manufacturing, Purchasing, Importing, and Donating Masks During the Public Health Emergency.](#)
- [CDC Released New Information for Health Departments on Developing a COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing Plan](#)
- [CDC Updated their FAQs on COVID-19 Testing at Laboratories](#)
- [CDC Updated their Information on how to Get COVID-19 Diagnostic Test and Tools](#)
- [CDC Released Information on When to Wear Gloves](#)

Guidance and Other Resources

- [OSHA Released COVID-19 Guidance for Nursing Home and Long-Term Care Facility Workers](#)
- [ASPR Released a Medical Operations Coordination Cells Toolkit](#)
- [ASPR Released Mini Modules to Relieve Stress For Healthcare Workers Responding to COVID-19: Leading Towards Organizational Wellness in an Emergency](#)
- [FEMA Released a Fact Sheet on Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic: Alternate Care Site \(ACS\) “Warm Sites.”](#)
- [FEMA has Developed an Exercise Starter Kit for Reopening](#)
- [CDC Updated their Guidance on Operational Considerations for Containing COVID-19 in non-US Healthcare Settings](#)
- [CDC Updated the Information and Resources to Support States, and Tribes in Helping to Get and Keep America Open](#)
- [CDC Guidance on Reopening Schools, Camps, and Childcare programs ; Restaurants, and Workplaces](#)
- [CDC also Released Guidance for colleges and universities](#)
- [CDC Updated their Preparedness Tools for Healthcare Professionals and Facilities Responding to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\).](#)

- [CDC Released a Framework for Healthcare Systems Providing Non-COVID-19 Clinical Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [CDC Released information on Special Considerations for Patients on Home Dialysis](#)
- [CDC Updated their Interim Recommendations for U.S. Households with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\).](#)
- [CDC Updated their Information on Running Essential Errands](#)
- [CDC has Updated FAQs about COVID-19 and Children](#)
- [CMS Released a New Toolkit for Nursing Homes](#)
- [ACL Updated Information in their COVID FAQs for Title VI Grantees](#)
- [FDA Issues a Best Practices for Re-Opening Retail Food Establishments During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)