



Indian Health Service Press Release

October 29, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: (301) 443-3593, newsroom@ihs.gov

IHS Receives 150,000 additional BinaxNOW COVID-19 Tests

The Indian Health Service has received an additional 150,000 Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Card rapid point-of-care COVID-19 tests allocated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These tests will support efforts to increase testing in tribal communities where there have been recent increases in new cases and hospitalizations related to the ongoing outbreak.

Surge testing is one of many tools we are utilizing now to assist tribal leadership to reduce community spread. More than a million COVID-19 tests have been conducted throughout the Indian health system, a number equivalent to 65% of the IHS user population. This exceeds the overall U.S. testing rate of 43%. Data from testing is used to guide response efforts to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

“Through strategic deployment of rapid tests to higher-risk individuals, accompanied by federal surge-testing of individuals where there are outbreaks – our national plan to provide the right test, at the right time, to the right person is working,” Assistant Secretary for Health Admiral Brett Giroir, MD, said when the initial BinaxNOW allocation was announced.

Four weeks after the IHS [announced](#) it would deploy an initial allocation of 300,000 state-of-the-art Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 tests to assist tribal communities’ ongoing reopening efforts, use of the BinaxNOW allocations are largely being deployed to serve eligible federal, tribal, and urban Indian health programs that care for students, elders, and other special needs populations. More than 220,400 of these BinaxNOW tests have now [been distributed throughout the Indian health system](#).

“By distributing these tests where they are needed most, and focusing on improving testing access for the most vulnerable segments of the population, we can better protect tribal communities,” said IHS Chief Medical Officer Rear Adm. Michael Toedt, M.D. “The IHS is grateful for receiving these tests to further expand our testing capacity.”

The BinaxNOW test uses nasal swabs and is simple to use, inexpensive, and can be easily employed by medical personnel or trained operators in certain non-clinical environments operating with a [Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments](#) certificate. The BinaxNOW does not require a machine; the test is run on a card that is about the size of a credit card. The BinaxNOW tests are in addition to 470 Abbott ID NOW rapid point-of-care analyzers and more than 645,000 Abbott ID NOW COVID-19 tests distributed throughout the Indian health system.

The IHS, an agency in the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#), provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.6 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who belong to [574 federally recognized tribes](#) in 37 states. Follow the agency via social media on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

###