



Indian Health Service Press Release

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

Indian Health Service Receives 300,000 BinaxNOW COVID-19 Tests for Distribution

The Indian Health Service received 300,000 rapid Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Card Point of Care SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic tests to expand testing for COVID-19 across tribal communities.

This announcement is part of an historic initiative led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense and the Administration which awarded a contract for \$760 million to Abbott for delivery of 150 million rapid tests to expand strategic, evidence-based testing in the United States. Tests will be distributed to serve schools and to assist elder and other special needs populations.

“The Abbott rapid test is a result of President Trump’s all-of-America approach to expand COVID-19 testing capacity,” said HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Adm. Brett Giroir, MD. “We are pleased to announce the expansion of this initiative to serve tribal communities. The Administration is now prepared to fully deploy this new testing asset to continue combatting the virus and safely and sensibly reopening our great nation.”

The Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card recently received emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration, does not require instrumentation, and will deliver COVID-19 test results in 15 minutes or less. The authorization is specific to individuals suspected of COVID-19 by their healthcare provider within the first seven days of symptom onset.

The Administration has laid the groundwork for this program with months of collaborative work, paving the regulatory and innovation pathways.

Tests will be distributed to eligible federal, tribal, and urban health programs that care for K-12 schoolchildren who attend Bureau of Indian Education-funded schools, students at tribal colleges and universities, or elders in senior living arrangements and other special needs populations.

“We are thankful to HHS, DoD and the Administration for expanding testing capacity in our tribal communities,” said IHS Director Rear Adm. Michael D. Weahkee. “The rapid point of care tests are an important resource in tribal communities and allows us to prioritize vulnerable patients, in this case students, the elderly and other special needs populations.”

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.

In April, IHS announced that it was given priority access to rapid point of care COVID-19 test systems as part of White House efforts to expand access to testing in rural communities. The IHS initially received 250 ID

NOW COVID-19 rapid point of care test systems. This allowed IHS to save personal protective equipment and ensure our critical workforce is safe and able to support the response, as only gloves and a facemask are necessary to administer the rapid point of care test. To date, the IHS National Service Supply Center has distributed 470 rapid point of care Abbott ID NOW test analyzers and over 515,000 COVID-19 tests to federal and tribal sites.

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](#).

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