

[View in browser](#)

RURAL HEALTH LINK: THE RURAL TRIBAL COVID-19 QUARTERLY DIGEST



The **Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC)** and **Seven Directions** would like to welcome you to the ***Rural Health Link: The Rural Tribal COVID-19 Quarterly Digest***. This newsletter will share program updates, the technical assistance schedule of events, as well as a variety of resources focused on COVID-19 and tribal health. Each issue will also feature a grantee spotlight article and video. We welcome your feedback. If you have any comments or recommendations for future content, please reach out to us at chsdtteam@gsu.edu.

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT



Grantee Profile - The Skokomish Tribe

The Skokomish Tribe is implementing a telehealth program, purchasing mobile units to be outfitted as COVID-19 mobile clinics, providing temporary housing for members needing to quarantine, and securing remote monitoring equipment to improve access and expand whole-person care to the community.

The Georgia Health Policy Center recently spoke to Deb Dunithan, the grants and contracts specialist for the Skokomish Tribe, about participation in the Rural Tribal COVID-19 Response Grant program.

[Read more](#)

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC UPDATES

Rural Tribal COVID-19 Response (RTCR) Quarterly Technical Assistance Schedule

Quarter 2: January-April 2021

RTCR: Psychological First Aid

The slides and recording from the Psychological First Aid webinar held on Jan. 7, 2021, have been posted to the [grantee website](#). Webinar materials can be accessed directly on the [RTCR Grant page](#).

RTCR: Motivational Interviewing

The slides, recording, and resources from the *Motivational Interviewing* webinar held on Feb. 25, 2021, have been posted as well. You can find them on the [RTCR Grant page](#).

Upcoming Webinar: Effective Communication and Engagement Strategies, Addressing Mortality Data Sensitive

Stay tuned for an invitation for the April 1, 2021 RTCR webinar, Effective Communication and Engagement Strategies, Addressing Mortality Data Sensitive, with the Seven Directions team!

RTCR Peer Group Calls

The first quarter peer group calls took place in January and February on the following topics:

- Addressing behavioral and mental health needs: staff morale and burnout
- Culturally competent health care
- Effective engagement strategies
- Indigenous public health communication and education: COVID-19 Messaging
- Overcoming supply chain challenges
- Telehealth

There were some great resources shared during these calls. You can find them [here](#).

Upcoming peer group calls are scheduled. Please contact the assigned technical assistance (TA) facilitator to join any or all the calls:



Addressing Behavioral and Mental Needs

Thursday, April 8 at 3 pm ET

Contact: Casi Brown | casib@uw.edu

The sustained response to the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on all our communities in many ways, including the morale and mental health of frontline staff from several sectors. This discussion group will provide tribal teams opportunities to discuss common issues and identify solutions that may be replicated in other settings.



Culturally Competent Health Care

Friday, April 23 at 3 pm ET

Contact: Raquel Aviles | raviles@uw.edu

Delivery of health care services is more complex with the advent of COVID-19 response, complicating the integration of key cultural supports to ensure uptake of care, adherence to treatment, and care satisfaction. This discussion group will discuss strategies to include culture in care delivery, while also adhering to necessary COVID-19 precautions to limit risk to patients, providers, and cultural experts / traditional healers.



Effective Engagement Strategies

Thursday, April 22 at 3 pm ET

Contact: Sofia Springer | spsinger@uw.edu

Health program engagement has grown more challenging with the advent of COVID-19 response requirements. Use of incentives, raffles, in-person events such as health fairs, and cultural activities, all require additional layers of protection to be integrated into programming given the need to reduce the risk of coronavirus contagion. This discussion group will address some of these challenges and provide an opportunity for sharing and exchange across tribal communities to identify best practices for engagement while ensuring the highest level of protection for participants.



Indigenous Public Health Communication

Friday, April 16 at 1 pm ET

Danielle Lucero | dlucero04@uw.edu

Health communication and education strategies have had to be revisited and, in some cases, completely overhauled to ensure the uptake of health information across diverse subgroups in our tribal communities. What may work for some age groups, genders, settings, and levels of need may not work for others. This discussion group will

cover ways to approach tailored COVID-19 messaging across diverse communities.



Overcoming Supply Chain Challenges

Thursday, April 29 at 3 pm ET

Casi Brown | casib@uw.edu

The ability of tribal and Indian Health Services clinics, along with tribal social and public health service programs, to obtain personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to deliver care has varied dramatically across regions and by the size of the clinic, as well as over time. This discussion group will provide opportunities to share purchasing strategies, discuss preferred options for PPE given population or subgroup needs, and identify practical options for those having additional challenges accessing PPE and other supplies.



Telehealth

Friday, April 30 at 1 pm ET

Raquel Aviles | raviles@uw.edu

Many tribes have turned to telehealth in response to COVID-19. In the best-case scenario, telehealth offers an opportunity to continue to provide needed health, public health, and social services without risk of contagion. This group will focus on challenges tribal health programs have faced regarding telehealth implementation, as well as identify strategies to overcome these challenges.

RTCR Grantee Directory

The Grantee Directory is final and will be distributed in March. Be on the lookout for an email from your project officer!

Grantee Deliverable

Quarter 3 Reports are due **March 29, 2021**. Please remember you can use your March calls to discuss your reports with your TA provider and get assistance with completing your quarterly reports.

NEWS ARTICLES

[Native Americans Embrace Vaccine, Virus Containment Measures](#)

Vaccine hesitancy has been a common theme within various minority communities across the nation. However, that theme doesn't hold entirely true for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and other tribes across that nation. The Federal Indian Health Service recently stated that they have administered close to 385,300 doses at a rate of approximately 18,490 per 100,000. This rate is higher than all but five U.S. states. The article also shares preventive measures that tribal leaders from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the Navajo Nation took to protect their communities.

Click [here](#) to access the article.

[Unconventional Awareness Campaign Aims to Build Trust for COVID-19 Vaccine among Indigenous People](#)

As some tribes across the nation embrace the COVID-19 vaccine, others voice some hesitancy. In an unconventional awareness campaign to address vaccine hesitancy among Indigenous people, a video shows two daughters (one is a family doctor) having an intimate conversation with their mother (a Mohawk activist), who has concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine. The "fire chat" video is a part of a project called Maad'ooking Mskiki, or "Sharing Medicine." The project is a virtual resource of accessible and culturally specific information about COVID-19 vaccines for the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. The "fire chat" videos are unscripted conversations between Indigenous health care providers and community leaders on various topics addressing COVID-19 vaccines.

Click [here](#) to access the article.

RESOURCES

[COVID-19 Data Reporting](#)

The John Hopkins Center for American Indian Health created an Excel template for COVID-19 data reporting. Instructions are provided on how to use the Excel template. The template includes a dashboard in which users can track confirmed cases, testing capacity, hospitalizations, and deaths. The Excel sheet also includes a data input tab and a codebook. The data reporting files allow

users to describe the current burden of COVID-19 cases and current testing patterns and monitor COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, deaths, and testing over time. Ultimately, the data could be used to inform decisions around COVID-19 and the tribal community.

Click [here](#) to access the spreadsheet.

[COVID-19 Vaccine Q&A Social Media Toolkit](#)

The John Hopkins Center for American Indian Health created a COVID-19 vaccine Q&A social media toolkit. The toolkit contains graphics to post to social media sites along with social media messages for health communication. The graphics and messages address the following concerns:

- Can a COVID-19 vaccine give you COVID-19?
- The vaccine was developed too quickly. Is it safe?
- Does the vaccine have long-term side effects?
- Will a COVID-19 vaccine protect us from getting really sick with COVID-19?

Click [here](#) to access the toolkit.

[National Tribal COVID-19 Response - National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Awareness](#)

President Biden issued a national strategy for combating the COVID-19 pandemic that includes seven goals and steps to accomplish those goals. The National Indian Health Board drafted a document highlighting these goals and outlines steps to achieve them. The seven goals are:

- Restoring trust in the American people
- Mounting a safe, effective, comprehensive vaccination campaign
- Mitigating the spread of the virus through expanding masking, testing, treatment, data, workforce, and clear public health standards
- Immediately expanding Emergency Relief and exercising the Defense Production Act
- Safely reopening schools, businesses, and travel, while protecting workers
- Protecting those most at risk and advancing equity, including across racial, ethnic, rural, and urban lines
- Restoring the United States' leadership globally and building a better preparedness infrastructure for future threats

Click [here](#) for the detailed steps to accomplish each goal.

[Understanding COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

The John Hopkins Center for American Indian Health drafted an infographic to disseminate information on how the COVID-19 vaccines work. The infographic highlights how vaccines help the body fight germs, prevent people from getting sick with COVID-19, and how the vaccines can help end the COVID-19 pandemic.

Click [here](#) to access the infographic.

[Update: National Tribal COVID-19 Response- President Biden's COVID Executive Actions](#)

The National Indian Health Board drafted a document that provides readers with executive actions President Biden has signed pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. The document was recently updated to include the Memorandum of Maximizing Assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), President Biden signed on Feb. 2, 2021. Specifically, President Biden is requiring FEMA to provide a 100% Federal cost-share for all work performed between Jan. 20, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2021, that is eligible for assistance under Category B "Emergency Protective Measures" of Public Assistance under the Stafford Act. Category B addresses measures taken in response to COVID-19, meaning that states, tribal, local, and territorial governments may be retroactively reimbursed for COVID-19- related response work performed before the issuance of this memorandum.

Click [here](#) for the list of executive actions signed by President Biden that addresses the COVID-19 pandemic.

UPCOMING EVENTS



[Virtual: CMS COVID-19 Office Hours](#)

March 16, 2021

Please join the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as they host their "Office Hours Call." The call allows hospitals, health systems, and providers to ask members of the agency questions regarding CMS' COVID-19 response.

[Register](#)

[Virtual: 2021 Annual Tribal Public Health Conference](#)



April 20-21, 2021

Please join the Southern Plains Tribal Health Board and Seventh Generation as they host their Tribal Health Conference. The theme of the conference, Resilience: Looking Towards the Future of Indigenous Public Health, represents the spirit of unity. The keynote speakers are:

- Dolores Bigfoot, Ph.D., Presidential Professor, Indian Country Child Trauma Center within the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
- Abigail Echo-hawk, Director of the Urban Indian Health Institute
- David Espey, M.D., Guest Researcher, Division of Population Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Ursula Bauer, Ph.D., M.P.H., Senior Advisor to the U.S. Surgeon General for Community Health and Economic Prosperity at Department of Health and Human Services

[Register](#)



[Indian Health Service Urban Indian Organization Leader Call](#)

April 28, 2021, 10:00-11:30 am CT

Please join the University of Oklahoma American Indian Institute as they host a webinar regarding the impact of COVID-19 policies and practices within tribal communities.

[Register](#)

You received this email because you are registered with Georgia Health Policy Center