



Office of American Indian  
& Alaska Native  
Health Affairs



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH**

**Office of American Indian/Alaska Native Health Affairs, Utah Department of Health  
Update on Activities to Support Tribal Governments and the Indian Health System (I/T/U)  
During the COVID-19 Crisis  
October 15, 2020**

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The Office of AI/AN Health Affairs at the UDOH has been actively engaged with the Indian Health System (I/T/U) in Utah during the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall mission of the office is to raise the health status of AI/AN's in Utah to that of the general population.

The primary goal for the office is to maintain the continuity of communications with all 8 tribal governments per their request (March 4, 2020). This includes the I/T/U and initiate tribal consultation as necessary during the public health emergency (UDOH Tribal Consultation Policy).

The office's primary objectives include:

- ✦ Facilitation, coordination and tracking of sample collection kits to those I/T/U facilities conducting testing and the Utah Public Health Lab (UPHL),
- ✦ Facilitate, coordinate, and track mobile testing events on reservations,
- ✦ Develop and establish Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) between the I/T/U public health departments and the UDOH epidemiology for reporting of communicable and infectious diseases; COVID-19,
- ✦ Facilitate and organize agreements between I/T/U and local health districts for contact tracing shared jurisdiction for any positive COVID-19 cases

**Daily/Weekly/Monthly Participation with Tribal Governments, I/T/U & State Public Health & Surveillance**

- ✦ UDOH Office of AI/AN Health Affairs hosts weekly COVID-19 calls specifically with the I/T/U Indian Health System (Indian Health Services/**T**ribal Health & Public Health/**U**rban Indian Organization).
  - ❖ Unified Command and UDOH Epi report out and update
  - ❖ Average 22 people on the calls each week
  - ❖ Consistently have a majority of tribes & I/T/U attend (at least 6 of the 9) and report out to the office any updates, challenges and issues experienced while addressing COVID-19
- ✦ Weekly (Wednesday) Navajo Tribal Epi Center (NNTEC) calls and update on Utah surveillance
- ✦ Weekly Navajo Nation State Task Force Call
- ✦ Weekly Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah COVID-19 mitigation call
- ✦ Weekly regional Indian Health Services (IHS) call
- ✦ Biweekly ASTHO State Tribal Health Liaison call
- ✦ Biweekly Navajo Nation COVID-19 Tri State calls update Call
- ✦ Monthly Utah Indian Health Advisory Board (UIHAB) meetings

## **Supporting the I/T/U COVID-19 Testing Capacity**

- ✦ Facilitation of mobile testing opportunities with Tribal programs and the Urban Indian Organization (UIO)
  - ❖ Since April 2020 UDOH has conducted the following 21 mobile testing events:
    - Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation = 4
    - Navajo Nation; Utah Navajo Health System = 8
    - Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, White Mesa Community = 4
    - Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake = 5
- ✦ UDOH & UPHL continue to deployed COVID-19 sample collection kits. To date, UPHL has provided 5,383 kits to the I/T/U throughout Utah. Tribal break down:
  - Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation = 210
  - Navajo Nation; Utah Navajo Health System = 4,130
  - Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah = 370
  - Skull Valley Band of Goshute = 180
  - Ute Mountain Ute, White Mesa = 60
  - Uintah & Ouray IHS Service Unit (Ute Indian Tribe) = 355
  - Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake = 100
- ✦ Utah Public Health Lab (UPHL) deployed 5 Abbott ID NOW machines to the Utah Navajo Health System, including tests. However, the test kits for these machines can be difficult to obtain due to production issues at the manufacturer level.
  - UDOH Testing has deployed 3 Binex testing capability to 3 tribal programs in UT

## **Vaccine distribution Plan with I/T/U for Flu and potential COVID-19 vaccine**

- ✦ March 4, 2020, the office confirmed with the Utah Tribal leaders and the Utah Indian Health Advisory Board (UIHAB) they request to work directly with the Utah Department of Health for vaccine ordering and distribution.
- ✦ The template is inclusive of the current UDOH Pan Flu Plan & the current Indian health Medical Counter Measures (MCM) template specific to the I/T/U.
- ✦ September 11th discussions on the planning were presented to the Utah Indian Health Advisory Board (UIHAB) and the DRAFT plan was presented at the October 9th UIHAB meeting for review and comment.
- ✦ October 13, 2020, Consultation on the Utah Tribal COVID-19 Vaccination Plan was held. The Tribes need to determine the route they want to take regarding distribution; state of federal.
- ✦ October 16, 2020 the Plan was included in the UDOH submission to the CDC and 90% determined which distribution method they wanted to use.
- ✦ UODH Immunization Program is providing updates at the weekly I/T/U COVID-19 calls and the monthly UIHAB meetings.

## **Current I/T/U Surveillance Information (as of 10/15/2020)**

- ✦ Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation (CTGR) has tested approximately 250 tribal members and are reporting 1 positive and no hospitalizations at this time. CTGR is conducting their own contact tracing.
- ✦ Navajo Nation; Utah Navajo Health Systems (UNHS) is reporting as of October 15th to UDOH, 6,477 tested, 661 overall positive cases and an overall positivity rate of 5.0% over the last 2 weeks on the Utah portion of the reservation. The UNHS is conducting their own contact tracing
- ✦ Northwestern Band of Shoshoni Nation (NWBSN) does not provide direct health services at this time; however, the tribe is reporting 6 confirmed cases, 3 hospitalizations, and no deaths at this time. They coordinate with the local health for contact tracing.

- ✦ Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah (PITU) is reporting as of early September, total test completed at 1,329 with an overall positivity rate of 7.5%; a positivity rate of 5% for the total AI/AN population the tribe provides services too; and a positivity rate of 4% for the PITU tribal membership. There have not been any deaths reported. The PITU is conducting their own contract tracing for AI/AN's and tribal members.
- ✦ San Juan Southern Paiute (SJSP) is reporting as of September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2 testing events one to be held in early October. The Tribe as reported working with the IHS facility in Tuba City, AZ for mobile testing events on the tribal portion of Navajo Mountain. They have tested 20 tribal members with zero positive COVID-19 tests. UPHL has offered to provide sample collection kits for those members on the Utah side.
- ✦ Skull Valley Band of Goshute (SVBG), have conducted 20 tests and no positives through September. UDOH providing support with sample collection kits and access to PPD. Early October testing continued with ~5 in patient positives. Tribe is conducting contact tracing in collaboration with the local health in Tooele.
- ✦ Ute Indian Tribe of Utah (UIT) through U & O IHS facility tested over 1100 AI/AN's as of September. There have been 17 positive cases for a 1.5% positivity rate. There were 4 cases hospitalized, and 1 death. They continue to test daily at the facility and are conducting outreach to 4 smaller more isolated communities. Currently, there are 6 active cases the Tribal emergency management is following.
- ✦ Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (U Mt.U) White Mesa has conducted tested 231, with 3 positive cases for 1.3% positivity rate, no hospitalizations or deaths at this time. The Ute Mt. Ute tribe is conducting their own contact tracing. However, the community in Towaco CO has seen a recent outbreak with 17 positive cases and has implemented strict curfews and reservation lock down.
- ✦ Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake (UICSL) has tested ~ 200 people with 3 positives cases, no hospitalizations or deaths at this time. The UICSL is also conducting their own contact tracing. They hold biweekly mobile testing events in collaboration with the UDOH.

#### **Current American Indian/Alaska Native Surveillance Information (10/15/2020)**

- ✦ Currently, Utah overall AI/AN data shows 10486 AI/AN tested for COVID-19; 1,472 have tested positive, positivity rate is 14%, hospitalizations 175, and 37 deaths.  
NOTE: this data is inclusive of AI/AN's who do not have Utah tribal affiliation and are not necessarily included in the tribal specific data above. Not all tribe's data is directly reported to UDOH.
- ✦ Utah COVID-19 demographics indicated that AI/AN lead the state in hospitalizations per/1000 people (117/1,000); approximately 1:10 AIAN who get COVID-19 will be hospitalized. This number is elevated in part due to the initial outbreak on the Navajo Nation, Utah portion.
- ✦ AI/A's have the highest co-morbidity rates when compared to other groups in Utah. Approximately 61% of AI/AN that are hospitalized have any pre-existing condition. Approximately 38% have Diabetes.

#### **Additional Facilitation and Coordination Efforts**

- ✦ Utah National Guard completed initial assessment to address capacity for Alternate Care Sites (ACS), and Quarantine and Isolation (Q & I) sites. Those I/T/U who requested assessments included:
  - Confederated Tribes of the Goshute
  - Utah Navajo Health System
  - Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake
- ✦ Pushed out Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) annual funding to the I/T/U EMS and Preparedness programs.

- ✦ Pushed out Utah legislative appropriation funding for tribal public health specific to COVID-19 to the I/T/U.
- ✦ PPE is available through the Unified Command web portal for PPE requests by the approved tribal health, preparedness and emergency management contacts (web link available upon request).
- ✦ Developed COVID-19 prevention materials and distributed to all the I/T/U throughout Utah. We have included a few examples (attached).
- ✦ Developed several public service announcements promoting wearing masks, keeping hands clean, and maintaining social distancing. Currently, the PSA's are targeted toward the Wasatch Front in Utah. We are working to address the need for PSA's in the rural areas specific to tribes. Links below:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIRSzAjixPM>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ip8565THjHM>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDGeQAVrIjk>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9USTEKLR1Yw>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFPICTZ10fl>

**Protect our Community**

**Clean hands  
keep our  
Elders safe**

Office of American Indian & Alaska Native Health Affairs

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

# Protect our Community

## Sanitizing your hands

helps **prevent the spread** of Covid-19

### Three Steps to Sanitize Your Hands



Apply the **sanitizer** product to the palm of one hand  
(read the label to learn the correct amount)



Rub your hands together, while spreading the  
**sanitizer product** over all the surfaces of your  
hands and in-between your fingers



Allow your hands to dry  
for about 20 seconds



**Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer**

which **contains at least 60% of alcohol**



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# Protect our Elders

**Clean hands  
& face masks**

help **prevent the spread**  
of Covid-19

**Clean hands  
for our**

**Elders' healing hands**



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# Protect our Elders



**Face Masks**

**& keeping 6 feet apart**

help **prevent the spread**  
of Covid-19

**Social Distancing**

**keep**

**Communities Safe**



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