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U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 28, 2020**

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## HHS Awards \$15 Million to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic in Rural Tribal Communities

Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded \$15 million to 52 Tribes, Tribal organizations, urban Indian health organizations, and other health services providers to Tribes across 20 states to prepare, prevent, and respond to COVID-19 in rural tribal communities.

“President Trump stands with Tribal nations across the country as they grapple with COVID-19 in rural communities,” said HHS Secretary Alex Azar. “Today’s funding gives Tribes critical support to build up their capacity for fighting COVID-19, boost testing capabilities, increase purchases of PPE, and hire and pay the personnel they need.”

These awards are funded through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act that President Trump signed into law on Friday, March 27, 2020. HRSA made awards to Federally Recognized Tribes and other tribal organizations based on their needs and capacity to implement COVID-19 related activities in their rural communities. Tribes could request up to \$300K in funding for these activities through the Rural Tribal COVID-19 Response (RTCR) program.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has hit many Tribal communities, particularly in rural areas, very hard,” said HRSA Administrator Tom Engels. “By directing new resources to these areas we are hoping to make a difference that will result in fewer new infections of this pernicious virus.”

The RTCR program funding allows Tribes maximum flexibility in how they respond to COVID-19 within their communities. Activities include supporting their workforce by ensuring access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and offering overtime and hazard pay, building infrastructure to include maximizing telehealth services; increasing their capacity to test and isolate suspected COVID-19 patients, purchasing mobile clinics or vehicles for transporting COVID-19 patients to increase access to health care services and providing culturally-informed educational resources and information to promote behaviors that slow the spread of the virus.

For the complete list of Rural Tribal COVID-19 Response program award recipients, visit:  
[www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/coronavirus/rural-tribal-covid-19-response-fy20-awards](https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/coronavirus/rural-tribal-covid-19-response-fy20-awards).

For more information about COVID-19, visit [www.coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov). For more information on HRSA's COVID-19 efforts, visit [www.hrsa.gov/coronavirus](https://www.hrsa.gov/coronavirus).

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Last revised: May 28, 2020

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