



July 20, 2020

Dear Tribal and Urban Indian Organization Leaders:

On July 15, the Department of Health and Human Services [announced](#) the move from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Health Safety Network to a newly created HHS Protect System that provides real-time hospital data during the COVID-19 epidemic. This streamlined data collection system allows HHS to better utilize real-time, automated data to help improve the federal COVID-19 response by ensuring faster and more accurate distribution of therapeutics and supplies to all COVID-19 patients across the U.S. The COVID-19 hospital data is accessible to hospitals, states, localities and tribal partners via HHS Protect, which provides better data automation, more transparency, reduced burdens on hospitals, and greater data access for health care experts and government officials. HHS released [information and FAQs](#) related to the updated hospital reporting protocols.

On July 14, the HHS kicked off the virtual 2020 HHS Regional Tribal Consultation season. In accordance with the Department’s [policy](#) on tribal consultation, we join Regional Directors and other HHS leadership to meet and consult with tribes on regional-specific issues as well as national level issues that impact tribes. The IHS remains committed to engaging in meaningful tribal consultation with tribal leaders, and conferring with urban Indian organizations leaders as we continue working on our mission “to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives.” For registration and access to information on upcoming HHS Regional Tribal consultation, please visit the [HHS Tribal Consultation website](#). You may also access materials or presentations shared during prior sessions on the website. Tribes are strongly encouraged to submit written testimony to consultation@hhs.gov by September 4. In addition, tribes may contact their regional tribal liaison for one-on-one consultations.

On July 8, President Trump commemorated the 50th anniversary of Indian Self-Determination. On July 8, 1970, President Richard M. Nixon issued a “Special Message to Congress on Indian Affairs,” which served to herald a new era in federal Indian policy. Building on this momentum, Congress passed and President Ford signed into law the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. Titles one and five of the Act provide tribes the option to exercise the right to self-determination by assuming control and management of programs previously

administered by the federal government. Today, over \$3.2 billion of the Indian Health Services' appropriation is transferred to tribes and tribal organizations through contracts and compacts. Under Title I there are over 230 tribes and tribal organizations, and nearly 240 contracts and annual funding agreements. Under Title V, IHS is party to 105 through which approximately \$2.4 billion of the IHS budget is transferred to tribes and tribal organizations. Over 375 tribes, or 65 percent of all federally recognized tribes participate in Title V. This IHS is committed to upholding the government-to-government relationship through building, strengthening, and sustaining collaborative relationships with tribes and tribal organizations by providing information, technical assistance, and policy coordination in support of Indian self-determination.

In my last e-mail, I shared a [warning](#) from the Food and Drug Administration about the risk of some hand sanitizers contaminated with methanol, which can be toxic when absorbed through the skin or life-threatening when ingested. The FDA continues to warn consumers and health care providers about hand sanitizers that have tested positive for methanol contamination and continues to quality-test hand sanitizers. Here is a [list](#) of products that consumers should not to use. Check [this webpage](#) daily for updates and this [Q&A for Consumers: Hand Sanitizers and COVID-19](#).

Finally, on July 30, I encourage you to join the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement and the Office of Head Start's American Indian and Alaska Native Collaboration Office for a facilitated webinar on ["Stories of Healing and Resilience from native Communities During Challenging Times."](#) This webinar will share methods for how American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start and Early Head Start programs are using their strengths and wisdom to adapt, cope and heal.

I look forward to future engagements with you and encourage you to continue checking our [IHS Coronavirus webpage](#) for the most up to date information on our COVID-19 response activities.

Respectfully,

Michael

RADM Michael D. Weahkee, MBA, MHSA
Assistant Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service
Director, Indian Health Service

Below is general information on various topics that could be of interest to you and your community. Web links are included where you can find more information on each topic.

Testing/Supplies/Contact Tracing Resources:

- [CDC COVID-19 one-stop shop](#)
- [CDC Updated Guidance for U.S. healthcare facilities](#)
- [CDC Guidance to Minimize risk of spreading COVID-19 when sharing personal vehicles in tribal communities](#)
- [CDC Guidance for healthcare workers on COVID-19 testing](#)
- [CDC Guidance on How to use personal protective equipment](#)
- [CDC Strategies for Optimizing the supply of eye protection](#)
- [CDC Considerations for Wearing cloth face coverings](#)
- [CDC Considerations for When to wear and when not to wear gloves](#)
- [CDC Communication tools and resources on COVID-19](#)
- [CDC Optimization strategies for PPE](#)
- [CDC Employer Toolkit](#)
- [CDC contact communications toolkit for health departments](#)
- [CDC and FEMA Fact sheet on PPE and preservation best practices](#)
- [CMS Toolkit on state actions to mitigate COVID-19 prevalence in nursing homes](#)