



## **SUMMARY OF COVID-2019 SURVEY RESPONSES**

Prepared by the National Indian Health Board

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

We conducted a rapid survey to assess the needs of Tribes regarding the evolving novel coronavirus (COVID-2019) outbreak. We collected 197 response between March 3 and 13, 2020. At the time of survey, about half of the respondents indicated they had received information from the state (n=95, 51%) or federal governments (n=108, 53%). Less than a fifth reported receiving resources (including but not limited to money, technical assistance, or supplies) from the state (n=34, 18%) or federal (n=31, 16%) governments. Only six respondents reported having diagnostic test kits (n=6, 3%), but none had utilized them at the time of response. Respondents anticipated challenges around maintaining supplies, including protective equipment, educating and communicating public health information to the public, and maintaining workforce capacity, among other challenges.

## **PURPOSE AND METHODS**

In response to the growing concern about the COVID-2019 emergency, the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) developed a rapid survey to assess Tribal needs and resources<sup>1</sup>. This was distributed to Tribal leaders, providers, and partners via NIHB email lists on March 3, 2020. Responses were assessed for completion and analyzed using Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Word.

## **RESULTS**

Three hundred and fifty six individuals opened the survey; 203 submitted responses in the two weeks between March 3 and 13, 2020. We excluded 6 responses that were duplicate submissions or referred to urban Indian settings. Of the 197 complete responses, 140 (71%) were received in the first week (March 3-7) and the remaining were received in the second week (March 8-13).

### **Federal Government Response (n=197)**

We asked respondents about information and resources received from the federal government (Appendix, Table 1). At the time they completed the survey about half (n=108, 53%) reported that the federal government or an associated agency had reached out to them with information about COVID-2019. Less than a fifth (n=31, 16%) reported they had received resources to respond to the outbreak. About one quarter (n=50, 25%) reported receiving resources for prevention efforts.

### **State Government Response (n=186)**

We asked respondents about information and resources received from the state government (Appendix, Table 2). At the time they completed the survey about half (n=95, 51%) reported that the state government had reached out to them with information about COVID-2019. About one fifth (n=34, 18%) reported they had received resources to respond to the outbreak. One third (n=62, 33%) reported receiving resources for prevention efforts.

### **Diagnostic and Response capacity (n=183)**

Almost no respondents reported using a COVID-2019 diagnostic test (n=6, 3%). Those who reported having kits were asked what challenges they faced with the kits. Half (n=3) stated that they had them but had not used them at the time of survey. The other half did not provide information.

Only about one quarter (n=44, 24%) reported they had the capacity to isolate ill patients.

### **Anticipated Challenges**

We asked respondents to share any challenges they expected with the evolving COVID-2019 outbreak. Several key challenges were described and summarized below.

- **Supplies:** Many respondents indicated the need for supplies in their communities; several reported a shortage of personal protective equipment and hygiene products. A few respondents noted the difficulty faced by residents in rural areas who need to travel distances to obtain home goods and supplies needed for potential self-quarantine.

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<sup>1</sup> “Resources” include but are not limited to the following: money, technical assistance, or supplies.

- ***Education and information on prevention and management:*** Many respondents noted they wanted materials on best practices for transmission prevention for community members and key risk groups (i.e. elders), and guidance on what information to communicate regarding COVID-2019. One respondent noted having culturally-relevant materials for Indian Country would be helpful. Casinos were also described by some respondents as a location with the potential for high transmission and flow of many people.
- ***Workforce and Healthcare Capacity:*** Several respondents described anticipating challenges to maintain adequate healthcare staffing, for example in the event healthcare workers needed to self-quarantine. Several also described concerns around ability to isolate patients, or accessing hospitals with the capacity in the event the community did not have isolation facilities. One individual noted they may need to consider reducing clinical services to one location if they were unable to maintain their current staffing levels.
- ***Planning for outbreak management:*** A few respondents expressed the need for guidance and planning for operations in the event of a local outbreak, and for emergency preparedness more broadly.
- ***Testing kits:*** Several asked about how to obtain testing kits, and anticipated challenges in being able to test a large number of people.
- ***Communication with Local, State, and Federal entities:*** Some expressed the need for strong communication between Tribes and Local, State, and Federal governments, particularly IHS. One respondent noted the challenge of determining who has jurisdiction over responding to potential cases on reservations.
- ***Housing:*** A few respondents also noted the unique challenge of limiting the spread of COVID-2019 in multi-generational households.

## APPENDIX

***Table 1 - Federal Government Response (n=197)***

Question	n	%
<b>Govt. has reached out with information</b>		
Yes	105	53%
No	64	32%
Unsure	25	13%
Left blank	3	2%
<b>Has received resources</b>		
Yes	31	16%
No	131	66%
Unsure	35	18%
<b>Has received Durable Medical Equipment</b>		
Yes	14	7%
No	164	83%
Unsure	19	10%
<b>Has received personal protective equipment</b>		
Yes	8	4%
No	171	87%
Unsure	18	9%
<b>Has received prevention resources</b>		
Yes	50	25%
No	125	63%
Unsure	22	11%

***Table 2 - State Government Response (n=186)***

Question	n	%
<b>Govt. has reached out with information</b>		
Yes	95	51%
No	67	36%
Unsure	24	13%
<b>Has received resources</b>		
Yes	34	18%
No	126	68%
Unsure	26	14%
<b>Has received Durable Medical Equipment</b>		
Yes	3	2%
No	165	89%
Unsure	18	10%
<b>Has received personal protective equipment</b>		
Yes	3	2%
No	167	90%

Unsure	16	9%
<b>Has received prevention resources</b>		
Yes	62	33%
No	106	57%
Unsure	18	10%

***Table 3 - Diagnostic and Response Capacity (n=183)***

<b>Question</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Is currently using COVID-2019 diagnostic test</b>		
Yes	6	3%
No	150	82%
Unsure	27	15%
<b>Has the capacity to isolate persons who test positive</b>		
Yes	44	24%
No	101	55%
Unsure	38	21%