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COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE— CLIENT ALERT

TO: TRIBAL LEADERS
FROM: BIG FIRE LAW & POLICY GROUP
DATE: NOVEMBER, 6, 2020
RE: COVID-19 VACCINE DECISION DEADLINE **TODAY**

In May 2020, the United States initiated Operation Warp Speed to accelerate the development, approval and distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine. Initial distribution of a vaccine is slated for January 2021. The United States Indian Health Service (“IHS”) has been consulting with tribes and urban Indian health organizations with some pretty rapid turnaround times. The most recent is the decision that tribes need to make on whether they elect to be included in the federal (HHS/IHS) vaccine distribution or their state vaccine distribution. The October 30, 2020 deadline was extended to November 6, 2020.

If your Tribe already submitted its preference and wishes to *change* its decision, contact consultation@hhs.gov to make a correction.

Please contact either your IHS point of contact or your state point of contact to notify them of your Tribe’s decision.

IHS Points of Contact:

Alaska – Evangelyn (Angel) Dotomain - evangelyn.dotomain@ihs.gov

Albuquerque - CAPT Wil Darwin – Wil.darwin@ihs.gov

Bemidji - Melissa Opsahl – Melissa.opsahl@ihs.gov

Billings - Janice Roth – Janice.roth@ihs.gov and

Angela Trout - angela.trout@ihs.gov

California - Rachel Harvey - Rachel.Harvey@IHS.gov

Great Plains - Dayle Knutson – dayle.knutson@ihs.gov and

Brent Rohlfs – brent.rohlfs@ihs.gov

Nashville - Nathan Wyatt - Nathan.Wyatt@ihs.gov

Navajo - Sherri Helton - sherri.helton@ihs.gov

Oklahoma City - CAPT Brian Wren - brian.wren@ihs.gov *Phoenix*

- CDR Loretta Haven - Loretta.haven@ihs.gov

Portland - CAPT Roney Won – Roney.won@ihs.gov

Tucson - Dr. Rodrigo Villar – Rodrigo.villar@ihs.gov

State Points of Contact:

Contact Your State

Center For Disease Control and Prevention List Contact List [Here](#)

See HHS Dear Tribal Leader Extension Letter Attached Below

-See Operation Warp Speed Website [Here](#)

See IHS Vaccine Website [Here](#)

Mask Up!

Stay Safe.

**If you would like assistance with this decision,
please contact your Big Fire Attorney**

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October 30, 2020

Dear Tribal Leader,

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) remains committed to ensuring that Tribal nations have equitable access to COVID-19 vaccine. HHS values Tribal leaders' rapid and robust input as we work together on a significantly accelerated timeline. To that end, we understand many of the concerns that Tribes have shared with us over the past few days in meeting today's deadline for determining COVID-19 vaccine distribution. As announced on today's national Webinar hosted by the National Indian Health Board, Operation Warp Speed has approved a one week extension for Tribes with healthcare facilities to determine their vaccine distribution preference.

That means that Tribes with healthcare facilities now have until **November 6th** to contact IHS if they would like to be included in IHS' distribution or contact their State health authority if they want to be included in the state distribution. We know that this is still a tight deadline but it is absolutely critical that this information be received by November 6th in order to ensure equitable COVID-19 Vaccine access for Tribes as soon as a COVID-19 vaccine is available. HHS also recognizes that if and when additional vaccine candidates are approved and manufacturing is increased, additional flexibilities in distribution may occur. However, in order to increase readiness at all levels and ensure immediate access, Tribes need to submit their decision by November 6th.

Tribes are encouraged to reach out to their state health authority and their IHS Area Office COVID Vaccine Point of Contact to better understand the details of their COVID-19 plan to help make this decision based on the information available to date. For general questions or concerns the CDC's Federal Entities Planning Team can be contacted at CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF Federal Entities Planning TM <eocevent474@cdc.gov>.

We greatly appreciate all the recommendations and feedback that Tribes have shared throughout the Vaccine Planning process and we look forward to continued partnership and collaboration.

Indian Health Service Area Vaccine Point of Contacts

- Alaska – Evangelyn (Angel) Dotomain - evangelyn.dotomain@ihs.gov
- Albuquerque - CAPT Wil Darwin – Wil.darwin@ihs.gov
- Bemidji - Melissa Opsahl – Melissa.opsahl@ihs.gov
- Billings - Janice Roth – Janice.roth@ihs.gov and Angela Trout - angela.troutt@ihs.gov
- California - Rachel Harvey - Rachel.Harvey@IHS.gov
- Great Plains - Dayle Knutson – dayle.knutson@ihs.gov and Brent Rohlfs – brent.rohlfs@ihs.gov
- Nashville - Nathan Wyatt - Nathan.Wyatt@ihs.gov
- Navajo - Sherri Helton - sherri.helton@ihs.gov
- Oklahoma City - CAPT Brian Wren - brian.wren@ihs.gov
- Phoenix - CDR Loretta Haven-Loretta.haven@ihs.gov
- Portland - CAPT Roney Won – Roney.won@ihs.gov
- Tucson - Dr. Rodrigo Villar–Rodrigo.villar@ihs.gov

Tribal Affairs Team

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Department of Health and Human Services