



# National Indian Health Board NATIONAL TRIBAL COVID-19 RESPONSE

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## National Institutes of Health (NIH)

### Agency Background

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the nation's medical research agency, and researchers funded by NIH have made important discoveries that have the potential to improve health and reduce health disparities.

### COVID-19 Response

NIH created a 2019 novel coronavirus ([COVID-19 landing page](#)) where it is sharing its latest research information. The public can subscribe to COVID-19 updates from NIH at this [link](#).

On March 20, 2020, NIH announced that an employee tested positive for COVID-19. As of March 20, the agency has shifted all non-mission-critical laboratory operations to a maintenance phase to reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission. Beginning March 23, 2020, only mission-critical functions within NIH research laboratories will be supported. This includes care for research participants in non-elective clinical trials, coronavirus research, and urgent public health research recommended by NIH leadership. Information is available [HERE](#).

On March 25, 2020, the NIH National Library of Medicine (NLM), announced it would expand access to scientific papers on coronavirus for researchers, care providers, and the public through PubMed Central (PMC). PMC is NLM's digital archive of peer-reviewed biomedical and life sciences literature, and currently allows free access to 6 million journal article. More information [HERE](#).

### How does NIH interact with Tribes?

NIH administers a [Tribal Health Research Office](#) (THRO). THRO's website is updated regularly to show outreach to Indian Country. NIH also has a [Tribal Advisory Council](#) (TAC) and is drafting its first Tribal Consultation Policy. NIH also issued a [Strategic Plan for Tribal Health Research, FY 2019-2023](#). American Indians and Alaska Natives can subscribe to the THRO listserv for the latest updates and news – click [HERE](#) to stay informed.

### COVID-19 Outreach to Indian Country

NIH's Tribal Health Research Office initially published a Fact Sheet for Tribes on its public homepage but later removed it. Instead, NIH leadership asked all agency Institutes, Centers, and Offices to refer web traffic to the webpage of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) for the most up to date information. NIH's THRO has an active Facebook page, where it is regularly communicating and posting CDC updates for Tribes.

Due to COVID-19, the upcoming NIH TAC in-person meeting, scheduled for March 26-27, 2020, in Durham, North Carolina, has been postponed. Stay tuned for updates.

### Agency Tribal Contact

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For more information, visit NIHB's National Tribal COVID-19 Response page at [www.nihb.org](http://www.nihb.org)