



# **HO-CHUNK NATION**

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**



### **Ho-Chunk Nation COVID-19 Release on Holiday Gatherings**

The Ho-Chunk Nation President and the State of Wisconsin have issued Safer at Home orders, directing our communities to stay at home in order to slow the spread of COVID-19. There have been a handful of confirmed cases in Ho-Chunk Nation jurisdiction. The pandemic is now local. Isolating ourselves is currently our only effective weapon to stop this illness.

Safer at Home allows people to leave their homes for limited essential activities, including shopping for groceries, obtaining medicine, and caring for a family member in another household. The order does not allow for gatherings either indoors or outdoors of more than 10 people in a space at a time. Unfortunately, this caution includes religious and spiritual gatherings/practices.

During this time of year we recognize the renewal of life and the many observations of sacred beliefs. It remains vitally important to limit religious and spiritual gatherings to only people living within the same household to avoid transmitting the virus through any social gatherings. The Ho-Chunk Department of Health upholds the significance of our spiritual and cultural knowledge holders who we depend upon to pass along what they know to future generations. These esteemed individuals are becoming increasingly valued as the number of them has declined over time. We are asking everyone to continue to practice social distancing and be Safer at Home. The sacrifices we are making today will keep our communities safe, healthy and strong.

The Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health recommends finding alternate ways to stay connected with one another during this sacred season. The current circumstances are not what our ancestors could have predicted, but thankfully, with our sincere, strong beliefs, we can develop safer options for staying connected and nurturing our spiritual health during this challenging time.

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