



# HO-CHUNK NATION DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



## Ho-Chunk Department of Health Update Response to COVID-19

The Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health has been in constant communication with its local, State, Regional, and Federal partners regarding the rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic. We have been providing guidance to our Health Department staff as well as other internal Ho-Chunk Nation Departments regarding precautions and prevention strategies. The situation continues to evolve on a daily basis as new information becomes available. The number of positive cases in the State of Wisconsin continues to grow. This week the Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health received notification of our first positive case of COVID-19. We expect like the State of Wisconsin we will see an increase in cases within our communities. It is vital that we are all vigilant and continue to stay home and practice social distancing. This is the only way to help prevent the spread of the disease.

Over the past few weeks the Department of Health has limited the on-site services at our clinics to sick or injured patients and time sensitive procedures. All clinical appointments must be made over the phone. We have modified our processes to ensure patient and employee safety. There are now separate waiting areas, hallways, and exam rooms used for “sick” and “well” patients. Our Behavioral Health services are now available by phone only. Community Health continues to provide transport to essential medical appointments only for clients and has implemented calling patients to follow up on care. Food distribution continues to operate and accept new applications which are available on our website under Community Health Division, Food Distribution Program. While tail gate visits continue to occur the process to receive shares has changed to ensure proper social distancing. The Pharmacy has now started Curbside Pick-Up of medications, and continues the mail-out program. We have also implemented temperature checks for anyone entering into our buildings.

Part of the Department of Health efforts to respond to COVID-19 have centered on obtaining the proper personal protective equipment so that our Health Care Team can continue to provide services. We have been successful in securing a shipment of much needed supplies for personal protective equipment, and are exploring viable alternatives. We will continue to maximize the use of our current stock, prepare plans for the use of personal protective equipment, and provide guidance to staff on proper use of equipment during shortages.

The Department of Health has the capabilities to collect samples for testing of COVID-19. We currently have two external laboratories we send our samples to. We continue to seek out additional testing resources including increasing our onsite testing capabilities. As the access to testing has increased we will begin to see the number of positive cases increase. This is no cause for alarm as we expect this to occur with additional tests being conducted. While no one knows for certain when the peak of the positive cases will occur in Wisconsin some current projections indicate May or June. The peak is a

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direct reflection of how well everyone complies with the Safer at Home order from the Governor and from the Ho-Chunk Nation President.

The Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health continues to lead by example, working with our partners and developing our plans and implementing them quickly and efficiently. As the Executive Director of Health I am extremely proud of our team and the care and concern for the wellbeing of our community. We will continue to communicate with our Leadership and Community members as the response changes.