



HO-CHUNK NATION

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



FOR IMMEDIATE MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: March 9, 2021

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Waza highiwire

The vision of the Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health is to build a strong mind body and spirit together (Waza highiwire) and we need your help. The Department has been working to provide COVID-19 vaccine to our community members and employees. We have been able to receive adequate Moderna vaccine supplies to vaccinate each of the priority groups that we have identified. Vaccine events have been occurring at the House of Wellness and District 1 Community Center for the last 2 months. Starting the week of March 15th vaccine events are being expanded to Wittenberg, Nekoosa, and Tomah. These are all in an effort to reach as many Tribal members and employees possible. To date (3/6/2021), 1,465 first doses and 618 second doses have been given to Tribal Members. This is a great start but we still have more work to do. In order for the vaccine to provide the best protection to our entire community we need to vaccinate at least 70-80% of our community. It is vitally important that any Tribal Member and their household members be vaccinated. Increasing the number of those vaccinated not only can reduce the number of deaths in our community it can also decrease the number of hospitalizations and long-term effects of COVID-19. Getting vaccinated also has impacts on the overall health and wellbeing of our Tribal Community. Increasing the number of people vaccinated in our tribal community will help to get community members back to work. It will allow for the revenue generating operations to have more operations flexibility which, in turn, increases the potential income. This income provides support to many Tribal members. The benefits of more vaccinated individuals in our community include being able to gather together again safely for cultural events/celebrations, and provide protection to those who cannot be vaccinated due to age (children) or health status.

Vaccinating our community members 18 years and older is vitally important as they are a large segment of the working population that cares for elders and for children. Currently, for our Tribal members 18 years and older, 1,373 or 33% have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose in the state of Wisconsin and 1,465 or 24% of our members have received at least one dose

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nationally. In order to reach an immunity of at least 70%, 2,936 members statewide and 4,300 members nationwide need to be vaccinated (under Moderna, receive two doses).

One of the most vulnerable groups within our community include elders. At this time, of the 702 elders living in WI, 403 have received at least one dose, which is approximately 57% of our elders in the state. In order to reach an immunity of at least 70% within our elder population, 492 members statewide and 686 nationwide need to be vaccinated (under Moderna, receive two doses).

If you know of anyone in need of vaccine please contact the Department of Health and we can assist in arranging vaccine access. Please register for one of the upcoming events at HOW, DICC, Wittenberg, Nekoosa, or Tomah by going to the Department website (<https://health.ho-chunk.com/>) or calling 715-284-9851 ext. 35411 or 33126.

Focusing on our community is the DOH priority, but because our community interacts and relies on services such as schools, EMS, fire/rescue, roads, utilities (electric/heat), and mail service from outside of our community it is important that we work with our local public health partners. By working with our partners we can help to ensure our students have access to school. We can help to ensure our facilities have the infrastructure to operate effectively and that those outside of our community are able to access our businesses safely. The DOH has been working with local public health to assist in vaccinating educators and childcare providers as well as some of the essential public workers. We will continue to strategically work with our partners around vaccine to increase the protection of the health and wellbeing of our community members.

We have more work that needs to be done, until enough vaccine is available to everyone it is important that we continue to prevent COVID-19 by wearing a mask when going into public/attending events, stay 6 feet apart, wash hands routinely, stay home if you are ill, and get a test anytime you think you may have been exposed or if you are not feeling well.