COVID-19 Response
From the White Mountain Apache Tribe
April 1, 2020: First COVID-19 Case on Ft. Apache Indian Reservation
Non-Stop Food and Mask Delivery (made by Apache tribal members) to those in Quarantine

Prioritizing Elders

Baby Supplies for Small Children
What White Mountain Apache Tribal Members need to know about COVID-19

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?
Coronaviruses are a type of virus (germ) that can cause cold-like symptoms and sometimes serious problems with lungs and breathing. COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
Mild to severe respiratory illness, or problems with lungs and breathing. Symptoms include:
- Cough or shortness of breath.
- Fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell.

How does COVID-19 spread?
Person to person by coughing, sneezing, or personal contact like touching or shaking hands. Someone with mild symptoms may spread the disease without knowing they are sick.

Who is most at risk?
Anyone can get COVID-19. Those at risk of severe illness include:
- Elders and adults over 60 years of age,
- People with heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes.

How can I protect myself and my family?
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash hands.
- Practice physical distancing.
- Stay away from large gatherings and non-essential travel.

If someone gets sick, what can they do?
- If someone thinks they have been around someone with COVID-19 and they get a fever and symptoms such as cough or trouble breathing, they should call their healthcare provider or Indian Health Service at 928-338-4911 for medical advice.
- In an emergency, call 911.
- People who are mildly sick with COVID-19 do not need to see a healthcare provider and are able to recover at home.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash hands.
- Stay home and away from others for 14 days to avoid getting others sick.
Enacting Tribal Policies Throughout Pandemic Based on Evidence and CDC Guidance

- Reservation-wide Lockdown & Curfews
- Mask Mandate
- Decisions for re-opening based on real-time data analyzed by Indian Health Service and Johns Hopkins
Apaches have been infected at more than 10 times the rate of people in the state as a whole.

Yet their death rate from Covid-19 is far lower, just 1.3 percent, as compared with 2.1 percent in Arizona. Epidemiologists have a hopeful theory about what led to this startling result: Intensive contact tracing on the reservation likely enabled teams that included doctors to find and treat gravely ill people before it was too late to save them.

On Native American Land, Contact Tracing Is Saving Lives

As the coronavirus spread on the Fort Apache reservation in Arizona, medical teams sought out residents who might have been exposed. The effort paid off in unexpected ways.
JHCAIH “Tri-protect” COVID-19 Mitigation Model with Native American Communities

- Task-Shifting to Paraprofessionals
- Daily Check-Ins
- Pulse Ox Distribution to Monitor Symptoms
  - Home Visits for Wellness Checks
  - Prioritizing Elders’ Most Vulnerable
  - Interventions to Shorten Time between Symptom Onset and Test

Supported Isolation and Quarantine

Contact Tracing

Diagnostic Testing & Vaccination

- Food Distribution
- Water Solutions
- PPE
- Hygiene Kits
- Basic Supplies
- Medicine
- Alternative Shelters

- Drive Thru Testing
- Community Blitzes Home-Testing
- School-Testing
- Mobile Outreach Testing
- Serial Testing in High Risk Groups
In Spite of Highest Rates and Worst Conditions... Native Communities Wrestled COVID-19 to the Ground, Ahead of all Other Communities (Example: White Mountain Apache Tribe)
COVID-19 White Mountain Apache Vaccination Rates

WRSU: Percent Initiating and Completing Vaccination by Age Group

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Mental Health Promotion

- Mental health needs related to acute distress due to severe losses and consequences from COVID-19
  - Grief
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - PTSD
  - Historical Trauma
  - Suicide
  - Domestic/intimate partner violence
  - Increased or riskier substance use
Ongoing Projects WMAT and JHU

- Follow-up of Pfizer Vaccine Trial
- Antibody Testing
- Continued Household Surveillance & Long-Term Follow-up
- Brief interventions to promote rapid testing after symptoms
- Safe schools project
- Brief mental health interventions embedded in home-visiting and through other referrals
- Communications campaign to promote vaccine uptake in other regions