

Association of American Indian Physicians Announces COVID-19 and Flu Vaccine Campaign

Group launches website and resources urging continued vaccinations for American Indian and Alaska Native populations

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA. - The Association of American Indian Physicians (AAIP) recently announced its partnership with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to encourage increased COVID-19 and flu vaccination rates among American Indians and Alaska Natives. The partnership includes a brand new AAIP sponsored website - aaipvax.org - and additional resources to support and educate member physicians, providers, and tribal nations.

Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the Association of American Indian Physicians is a national, non-profit organization working to improve the overall health of American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The organization fosters programs that directly address widely acknowledged health disparities among the groups their member physicians serve.

“Increasing vaccinations is one way to ensure our communities thrive,” said AAIP Executive Director Tom Anderson. “We hear this time and again from our member physicians. We encourage all American Indians and Alaska Natives eligible for the COVID-19 and flu vaccines to get vaccinated. The COVID-19 booster is also important, so those eligible should also immediately get the booster vaccine.”

As the pandemic continues and flu season continues, AAIP is providing a new website featuring the latest vaccination information. The interactive site includes important statistics, trending topics and safety information. Video resources showcase American Indian and Alaska Native physicians and tribal culture.

“I can’t think of a better way for AAIP to celebrate National Native American Heritage Month than to create and extend resources aimed at saving lives. Our elders are especially at risk because of the ongoing pandemic and flu season. Vaccinations help save these special community members and thus preserve the cultures they represent and teach us so much about,” said AAIP President Dr. Mary Owen.

The CDC reports increased risks for COVID-19 among American Indian and Alaska Natives -- more than U.S. residents of other races. Based on COVID-19 weekly data released by the CDC in late August, reports indicate a particularly large increase for death rates among American Indian and Alaska Natives in mid-August 2021, reflecting the spread of the Delta variant. Since September 2021, COVID-19 infection rates between racial groups have narrowed, however, American Indian and Alaska Natives remain the highest risk for COVID-19-related deaths.

AAIP physicians suggest these disparities mean getting vaccinations is crucial for tribal members and their communities. COVID-19 vaccination rates for American Indian and Alaska Natives are already among the highest for any ethnic group - 47.6 percent are fully vaccinated and 55.6 have had one dose of the vaccine. AAIP wants to see that number climb even higher.

AAIP suggests American Indians and Alaska Natives contact their local Indian Health Service Clinic, pharmacy or physician to schedule COVID-19 vaccines and boosters and to make an appointment for the annual flu vaccine. The association will continue to provide the very latest vaccine information and resources at aaipvax.org.

“For decades, members of American Indian and Alaska Native communities were seen as invisible,” noted Dr. Mary Owen. “However, when we come together for our health and community, we show the vibrant diversity and longevity of our cultures. AAIP is proud to stand with and serve tribal members, physicians and communities.”

About AAIP

In 1971, fourteen American Indian and Alaska Native physicians endeavored to improve the overall health of their communities and the Association of American Indian Physicians was born. Today, hundreds of licensed and practicing physicians around the country are committed to that same mission. AAIP pursues excellence in Native American health care by advocating education in the health sciences and honoring traditional healing principles. AAIP members directly address widely acknowledged disparities in American Indian and Alaska Native health.

For more information about the Association of American Indian Physicians, see aaip.org.
Vaccination campaign resources can be found at aaipvax.org.

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