



National Indian Health Board NATIONAL TRIBAL COVID-19 RESPONSE

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National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Awareness

Background

On January 21, 2021, President Joe Biden issued a National Strategy for combatting the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. The new Strategy, which provides seven goals and steps for how to achieve them, is meant to provide the framework for a cohesive national strategy for combatting the pandemic. The steps outline executive actions and Congressional requests that the Administration will take in order to achieve the goals included in the plan. The Strategy commonly cites the need for a data and science driven approach to addressing the pandemic.

A summary of the steps under each goal is provided below.

The Seven Goals

- Restore Trust with the American People
 - President Biden has established a White House COVID-19 national response structure, which will work to establish clear lines of communication between the White House and governors, state public health officials, and local leaders.
 - The federal government will conduct regular, expert-led, science based public briefings and release regular reports on the state of the pandemic. They will also regularly share data (including on cases, testing, vaccinations, hospital admissions).
 - They will also lead public health campaigns, designed to counter misinformation and disinformation. The campaigns will cover items such as masking, testing, vaccinations, and vaccination hesitancy.

- Mount a Safe, Effective, Comprehensive Vaccination Campaign.
 - The President will leverage existing contract authorities, including the Defense Production Act, in order to speed up production of the vaccine. The federal government will also prioritize purchasing items such as glass vials, syringes, and needles that could cause a bottleneck in the delivery of the vaccine.
 - The federal government will end the policy of holding back significant level of vaccine doses. They will instead hold back a small reserve and closely monitor supply in order to ensure that everyone has access to a full regimen of the vaccine. States and localities will also be provided with clear and consistent projections on vaccine availability.
 - The federal government will expand the usage of alternative vaccination sites.



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- The federal government will deploy targeted strategies to meet the needs of individuals and communities that are at an increased risk for COVID-19. Local public health officials will play a key role in this targeting. The federal government will use demographic data to identify communities hit hardest by the virus and will work with state, local, and community-based organizations to make sure that the vaccine reaches those communities.
 - The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will work with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to ensure that current payment rates for vaccine administration are accurate or whether a higher rate will be needed.
 - The federal government will utilize the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund to reimburse vaccination expenses incurred by state and local governments.
 - The federal government will address workforce shortages by taking steps to allow qualified professionals to administer the vaccine and encourage states to expand scope of practice laws and waive licensure requirements, as appropriate, in order to increase the number of professionals who can administer the vaccine.
- Mitigate Spread through Expanding Masking, Testing, Treatment, Data, Workforce, and Clear Public Health Standards
- The President has issued an executive order to mandate masking and physical distancing in federal buildings and by the federal employees and contractors. He has also called on governors, mayors, business leaders, and others to implement masking and physical distance requirements in localities all around the country.
 - The federal government will take steps to expand COVID-19 testing capacity, as well as provide testing protocols that inform the use of testing in congregate settings and in schools.
 - The federal government will support the development of therapeutics that are meant to treat COVID-19. Part of this effort will involve accelerating research and support for clinical trials with a focus on treatments that can readily scaled and administered. The President will also issue an executive order that will focus on improving and expanding access to care and treatment for COVID-19.
- Immediately Expand Emergency Relief and Exercise the Defense Production Act
- The President will direct FEMA to fully reimburse states for the cost of National Guard personnel and emergency supplies, including PPE for schools and childcare providers.
 - The President will invoke the Defense Production Act in order to fully supply shortfalls, this will accelerate the manufacturing of supplies, such as PPE, that can be used to address the pandemic.



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Federal agencies will also be directed to use all allowable legal authorities to address supply shortages.

- The Department of Defense (DOD), HHS, and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will be directed to develop recommendations to address the pricing of COVID-19 supplies.

- Safely Reopen Schools, Businesses, and Travel While Protecting Workers

- The Department of Education and HHS will be required to provide guidance on safe reopening and operating and develop a clearinghouse to share best practices for safe reopening and operating.
- The President has asked Congress to provide at least \$130 billion in dedicated funding to schools, \$350 billion in flexible state and local relief funds, and additional resources such as funds to implement screening testing.
- The President has asked Congress for \$25 billion in emergency stabilization to help child-care providers who have been hard hit by the pandemic. He has also asked for \$15 billion to help families that are struggling to afford child-care.
- The President has asked Congress for an additional \$35 billion in emergency stabilization funds for higher education.
- The President is asking the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue updated guidance on COVID-19 worker protections. He has also asked Congress to extend and expand emergency paid leave.

- Protect Those Most at Risk and Advance Equity, Including Across Racial, Ethnic, and Rural/Urban Lines

- The President will establish a high-level task force to address COVID-19 related health and social inequities and help coordinate an equitable pandemic response and recovery.
- The President will direct federal agencies to expand their data infrastructure for high-risk populations.
- The Administration will work to strengthen the social safety net to address the economic issues created by the pandemic, including requesting Congressional appropriations for items such as paid sick leave, child-care support, and rental assistance. They will also work to extend eligibility and enrollment flexibilities for select programs.
- The CDC will develop and update their public health guidance for high-risk populations and settings. They will also work with states to update their pandemic plans, as necessary.



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- Restore U.S. Leadership Globally and Build Better Preparedness for Future Threats
 - The United States will continue to engage with the World Health Organization (WHO), strengthening and growing their relationship with the organization. They will also take a more active role in the global response to the pandemic.
 - The federal government will build a better infrastructure to respond to future pandemics. The Administration will work to secure funding and Congressional support to establish an integrated, National Center for Epidemic Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics to expand our ability to respond to future pandemics. They will also review and seek to strengthen our pandemic supply chain, public health workforce, among other items.

Questions?

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