



LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE COVID PANDEMIC TO IMPROVE DIAGNOSIS

Addressing Health Inequities in
Indigenous Communities During the
COVID-19 Pandemic

January 14, 2022

Introduction

- ▶ Yá'átééh, Adriann Begay yinishyé
- ▶ Tábaahi (Edge of the Water) nishłíí,
- ▶ Bít'ahnii (Folded Arms People) báshishchiin
- ▶ Ta'néészahnii (Badlands People) dashichei
- ▶ Tl'aashchí'í (Red Cheek People) dashínáí



Disclaimer

- ▶ Information in this presentation is provided for informational and educational purposes
- ▶ Credit for some slides go to Dr. Don Warne and Dr. Sam Percy



American Indian/Alaskan
Native (AI/AN) population
is unique as we are born
with legal rights to health
services



WHAT IS THE LEGAL BASIS for this right to HEALTH CARE for AI/AN?

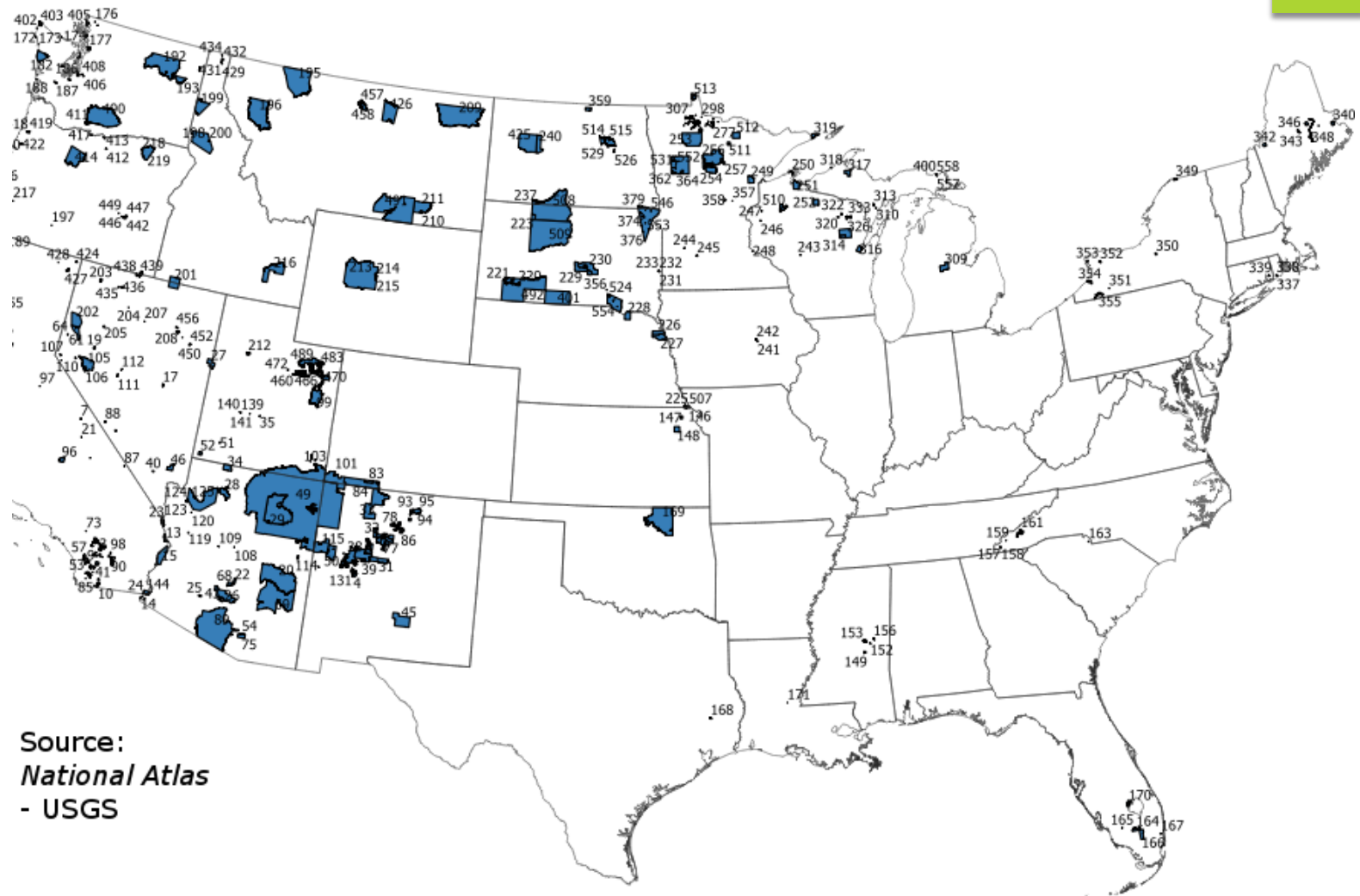
- 
- TREATIES
 - EXECUTIVE ORDERS
 - MULTIPLE COURT DECISIONS & LEGAL BASES
 - NUMEROUS OTHER LAWS

**Treaties based on exchanges for land and natural resources



This map represents the original pre-contact homelands of the hundreds of Tribal Nations that existed across what is now Canada and the lower 48 of the United States. Most of the names shown here are the indigenous autonyms that tribes use for themselves. In some cases where the original name was never recorded, other common names are used. Many tribes did not survive the invasion by Europeans, yet this map serves as a visual reminder of their memory. This is the first time for many of these tribes to ever have a place on a map. This is dedicated to all of the Nations across this land. May it instill pride in Native people and teach the non-Native public about our history.

Native American Reservations in the Continental United States



Historical Trauma

- ▶ ***“There is no greater sorrow on earth than the loss of one’s native land”*** written by Euripides in 431 BC

TRIBES ARE...

- ▶ Sovereign, self-governing nations
- ▶ In possession of signed treaties (contracts) with the US government deeding land in return for stated conditions, e.g., health, education, housing, etc.
- ▶ In a unique “trust relationship” vis a vis the US

TRUST RESPONSIBILITY

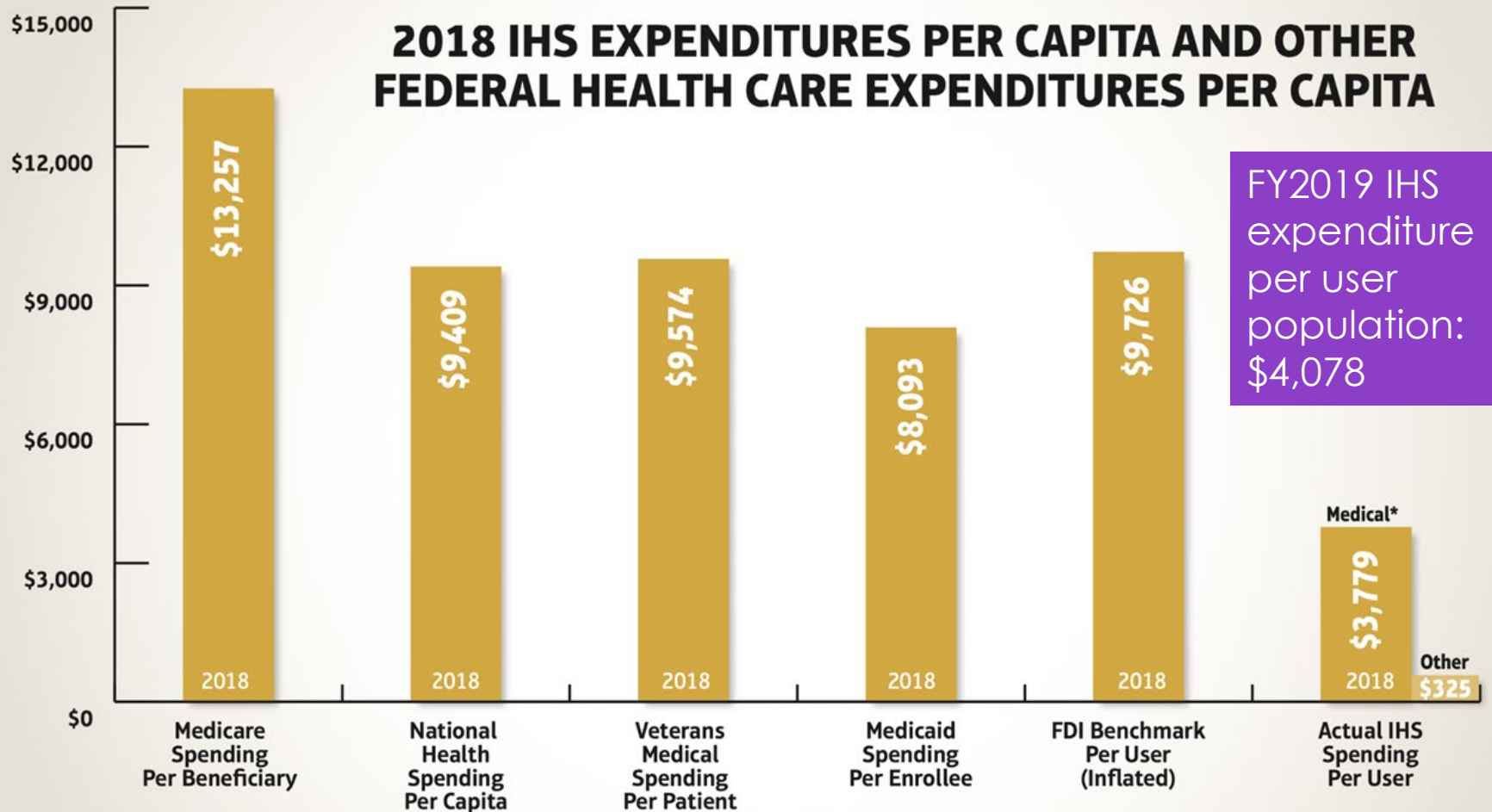
► 1977 US Congress American Indian Policy Review Commission:

“...an established legal obligation to protect Indian trust resources...and to provide economic and social programs necessary to raise the standard of living and the social well-being of Indian people ...to a level comparable to the non-Indian society”



► Is there documentation of these acts, laws, etc?

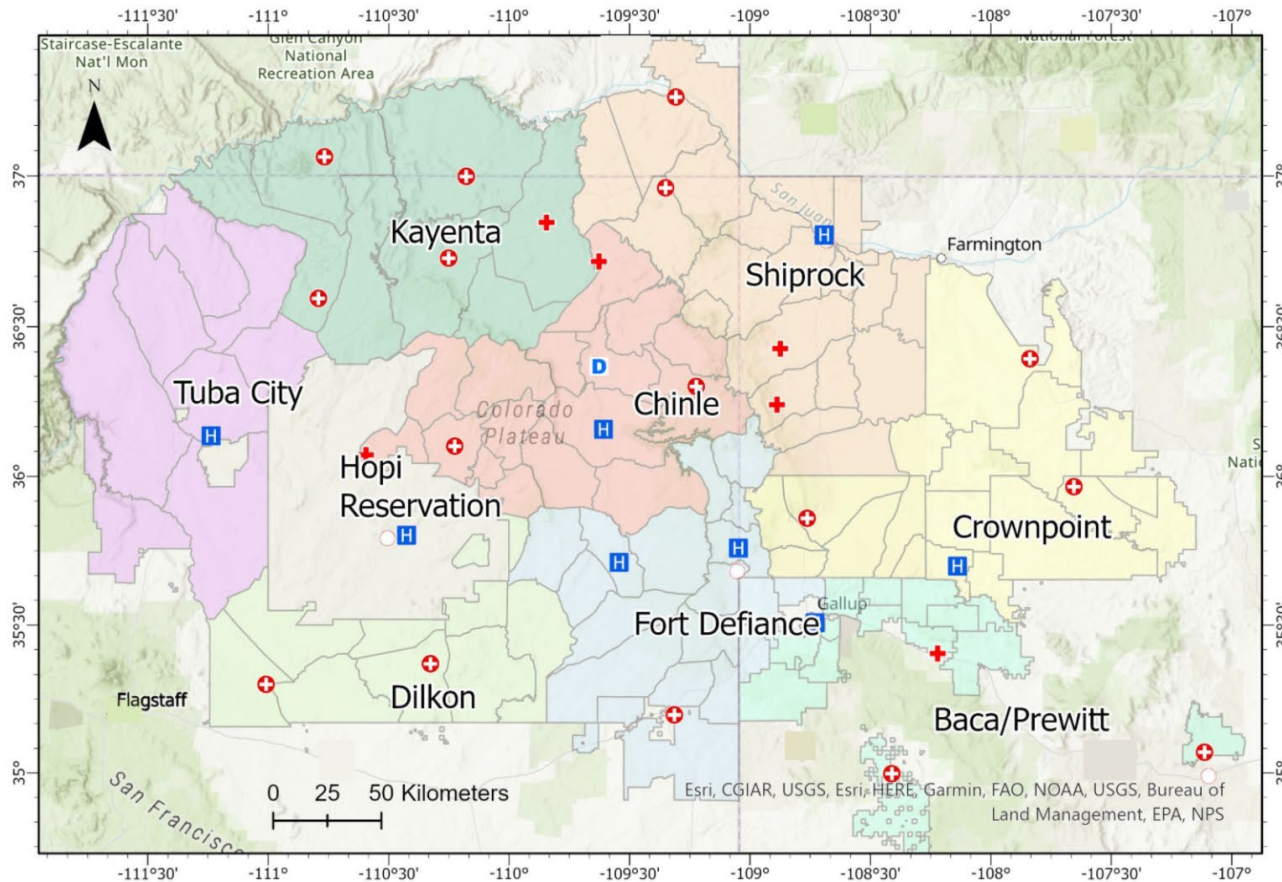
2018 IHS EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA AND OTHER FEDERAL HEALTH CARE EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA



*Payments by other sources for medical services provided to AIANs outside IHS is unknown.

4/6/2020

Health Care Services in the Navajo Nation



Health Facilities

- H Hospital
- B Behavioral Health Facility
- + Health Center
- D Dental Clinic
- + Health Station
- Other

Administrative Regions

- HOPI RESERVATION
- BACA/PREWITT
- CHINLE
- CROWNPOINT
- DILKON
- FORT DEFIANCE
- KAYENTA
- SHIPROCK
- TUBA CITY



Data Source: Indian Health Service. Healthcare Facilities of the Indian Health Service [Feature Layer].
 Scale Not Given. February 2021. https://maps.ihs.gov/server/rest/services/OPHS/ihs_health_facilities/MapServer/0



1960's



2000's



**Hi Acuity
ER**

**Peds converted
to low acuity ER**

**ER
triage**

Navajo Nation Confirms Case Of COVID-19 In Arizona

KNAU News Talk - Arizona Public Radio | KNAU STAFF
Published March 17, 2020 at 1:23 PM MST

The Salt Lake Tribune



THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS
Coronavirus Cases Spike In Navajo Nation, Where Water Service Is Often Scarce
MARCH 26, 2020 - 2:45 PM ET
BILL CHAPPELL

Lockdown order issued on Navajo Nation as coronavirus cases rise

Navajo Nation surpasses New York state for the highest Covid-19 infection rate in the US

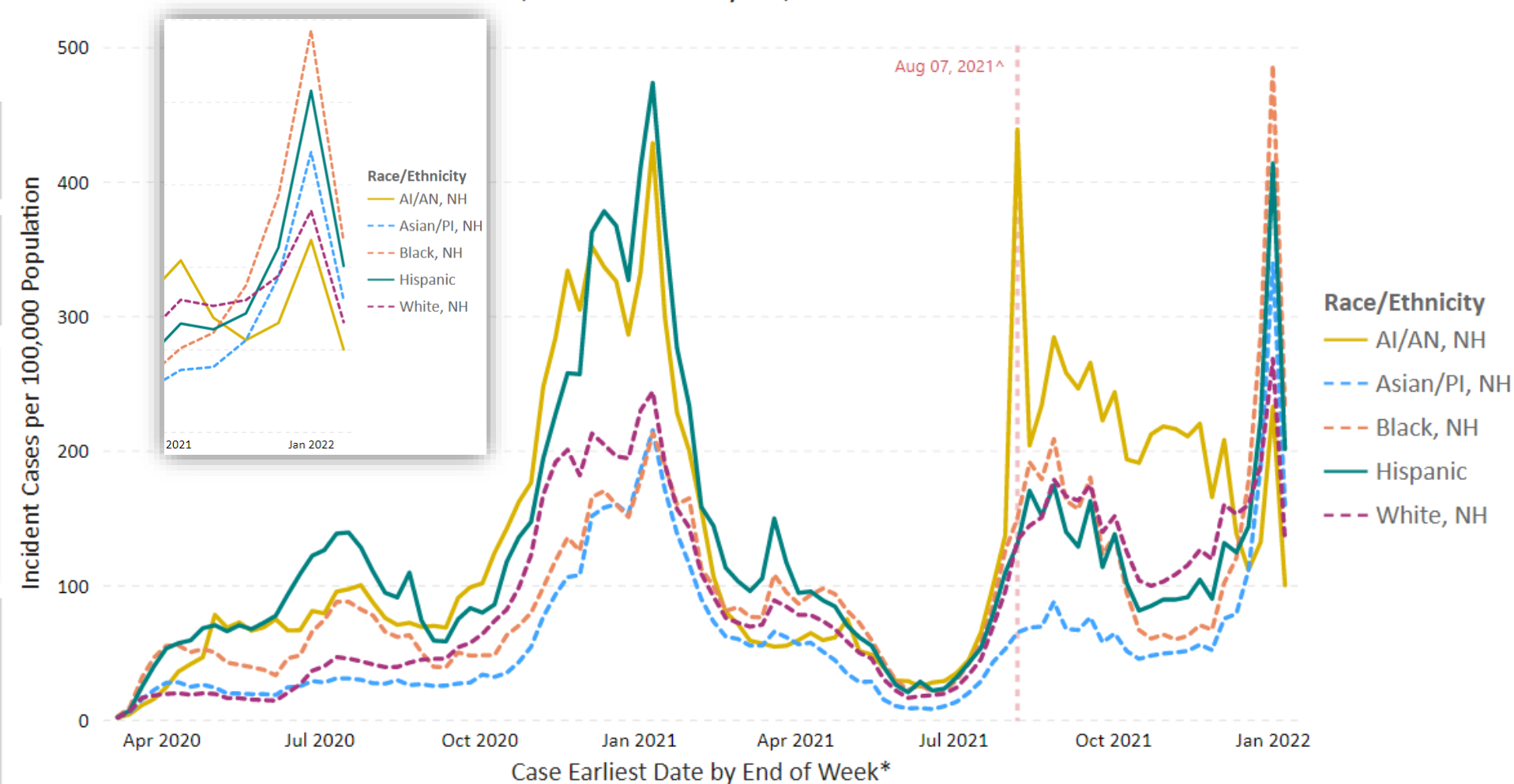
By Hollie Silverman, Konstantin Toropin, Sara Sidner and Leslie Perrot, CNN

Updated 5:55 PM ET, Mon May 18, 2020

COVID-19 Weekly Cases per 100,000 Population by Race/Ethnicity, United States

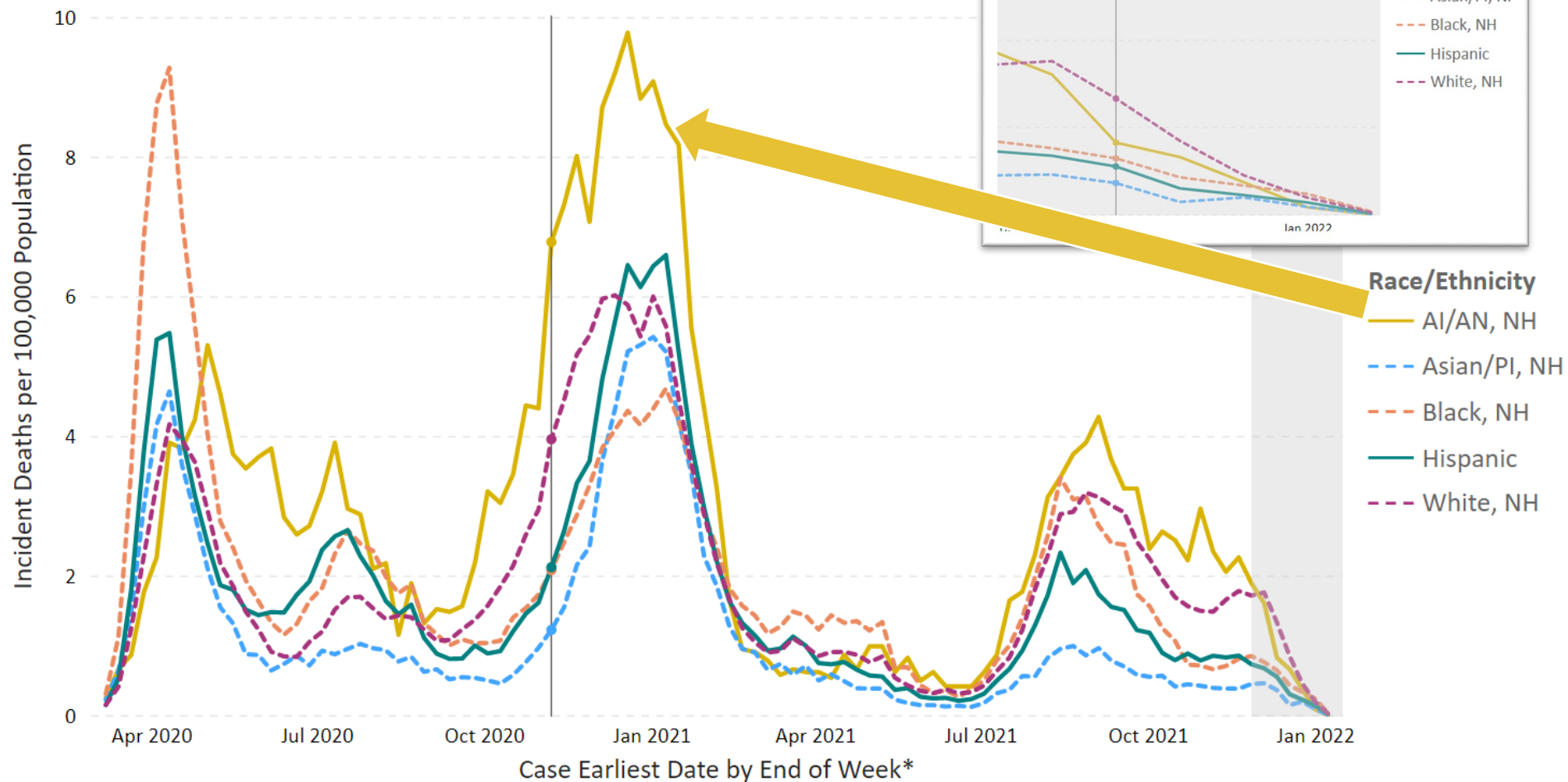


March 01, 2020 - January 08, 2022*



COVID-19 Weekly Deaths per 100,000 Population by Race/Ethnicity. United States

March 01, 2020 - January 08, 2022*



Expect the Unexpected

- Facilities
 - Pediatric care unit → 13 bed
 - Respiratory Care Unit → 26 bed
→ 40 bed → 55 bed
 - 6 Ventilators → 10 ventilators
 - 6 Heated high flow nasal cannula machines → 10 HHFNC
- Testing
 - Respiratory Clinic
 - Testing moved in house
- Staff
 - Cross train nurses from pediatrics, obstetrics and ambulatory care
 - UCSF nurses, HHS Disaster Medical Assistance Teams



Navajo Culture

- ▶ The culture of Navajo people is deeply rooted in the land we occupy, the language that is spoken, the songs that are sung, the ceremonies that are done, the prayers that are recited, the traditional foods that are shared, the animals that are raised, the beliefs in hozho, health & illness; and the relationships we are a part of..... **K'é**

K'é

- ▶ The kinship system for a Navajo is important
- ▶ Introduction to a group or to someone who you have not met before
- ▶ This sets your relationship with another individual and is based on respect, caring and protection
- ▶ Your clans identify who you are as a Navajo man or Navajo woman
- ▶ Each of us, as a man or woman, have different roles and responsibilities



Hózhó náhásdlíí'

WORLD & NATION

Despite obstacles, Native Americans have the nation's highest COVID-19 vaccination rate

Keys to the Navajo Nation's COVID-19 Vaccination Success

COVID-19 | HEALTH

Respect for community and elders, along with tribal sovereignty, equal strong COVID-19 vaccine uptake.

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WEATHER ▼

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ALWAYS ON

NEW MEXICO NEWS

Navajo Nation battles back from COVID-19, leads country in vaccinations

In Summary



- ▶ As health professionals of all kinds we have the unique responsibility of caring for others
- ▶ By increasing our cultural competence of the population(s) we serve, we enhance our ability to make connections with our patients, their families, and our own staff in the exam room, the hospital room, the staff meeting room and in community programs
- ▶ Historical stories may be difficult to hear, and are not meant to make anyone feel bad; but it is only through truth that we can learn to understand & respect one another

- ▶ These connections are vital in elevating the health status of those we serve
- ▶ Caring for others is a gift we each have been given; but more importantly, being able to help another discover their resilience is truly a blessing

