

# **PRESS RELEASE: NCUIH and Native American Lifelines Announce DMV Vaccines for Natives**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **National Council of Urban Indian Health and Native American Lifelines Announce DMV Vaccines for Natives**

**After months of barriers, urban Indians in the DMV will finally be able to get vaccinated.**

**Washington, D.C. (April 13, 2021)** – The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) and Native American Lifelines (NAL) are pleased to announce the availability of COVID-19 vaccinations for urban Indians in the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia metropolitan area. In partnership with the Indian Health Service and University of Maryland – Baltimore, registration is now available for appointments in Baltimore beginning on Wednesday, April 14.

“For months, we have fought tooth and nail to get vaccines for urban Indians in Maryland, D.C., and Virginia. The pandemic has wrought many challenges on urban Indians but getting a vaccine shouldn’t have been one of them. Any member of the hardest hit population shouldn’t have had to wait months for this lifesaving opportunity. This is also not what the trust responsibility for healthcare is supposed to be. As we are also serving record patients to address increased needs in behavioral health and domestic violence, we are glad to finally be able to vaccinate our community. We are grateful for partners like NCUIH, IHS, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore, who helped make this happen,” said Kerry Hawk-Lessard, Executive Director.

“As the only national organization focused on the health of urban Indians, we are pleased to finally announce that vaccines for Natives in the DMV are now available. It is disappointing that the population dying at the highest rates of COVID-19 worldwide is only just gaining access to vaccines in the DMV five days before the entire country will be eligible. This experience has highlighted a long-standing inequity faced by urban Indians and forced countless Natives to risk additional exposure when flying to reservations to receive a vaccine. As we’ve buried far too many relatives in the past year, we hope that this Administration and Congress will realize that it is now time to fully fund Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) and Indian Health Service as we fight our way to the end of this horrific pandemic,” said NCUIH CEO Francys Crevier (Algonquin).

## **Vaccine Distribution to Urban Indians**

Since last fall, NCUIH and NAL have pushed for inclusion of the 65,000 Natives in the Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia Metropolitan Area. As Natives are dying from COVID-19 at the highest rates worldwide, NCUIH has advocated to the federal government to prioritize this population for vaccines.

UIOs across the country have highly successful vaccine rollouts that have been touted in the national and local media. After a recent study in January from the Urban Indian Health Institute showed that nearly 75% of Natives would get vaccinated, UIOs are seeing record patients and regularly hosting mass vaccination clinics with hundreds of participants. Because of the success of vaccine administration by UIOs, local and other non-profit organizations have partnered with UIOs. While there is much talk of vaccine equity on a national scale, no state nor the District of Columbia, has prioritized Natives or any other race for vaccines, so UIOs have filled a vital role. For example, one UIO in Montana vaccinated 180 teachers who work with Native students, while many others are sharing their vaccines with the NAACP and LatinX organizations to reach other highly vulnerable groups.

NCUIH created an online petition to urge HHS to provide vaccines to DMV Natives and sent a letter to Administration officials to request vaccines. The Indian Health Service has also assisted the past several months, trying to coordinate vaccines for urban Indians in the area. Several Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) in other states even offered to fly their staff to the DMV to administer vaccines. Finally, urban Indians in the area will have access to vaccines through Native American Lifelines due to the hard work of NAL's staff and the advocacy of NCUIH.

### **Vaccine Clinic Information**

In partnership with the University of Maryland, Baltimore the clinic will be open to anyone 16 years of age and older who is eligible. Appointments will be available starting Wednesday, April 14. They will be scheduled on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays in the coming weeks. Because this will be an IHS-sponsored clinic, the following groups are deemed eligible as per Native American Lifelines vaccine plan: tribal citizens and descendants, non-Native family members, partners, or caregivers of tribal citizens and descendants, non-Native individuals working in Native-serving organizations (e.g., NCUIH, NCAI, NACA, NARF, NIGA, NIHB, BIA, BIE, IHS, HHS, Interior, etc.)

If you are unable to schedule your appointment online, in need of transportation assistance, please call Jessica or Bri at Native (410) 837 - 2258 (x102 for Jessica and x106 for Bri).

### **UMB Vaccine Clinic:**

Address: 601 W. Lombard St., Baltimore, Md. 21201

Parking: Pratt and Penn Garages

- Pratt Garage: 646 W. Pratt St.
- Penn Garage: 120 S. Penn St.
- Handicap or Mobility Assistance Parking:
  - Pratt Garage, 3rd floor

Hours of Operations: Wednesday-Saturday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. EST

If you have already received one dose of Pfizer and need a second dose, please call the number above to schedule a second dose if you do not see the time available online.

### **About NCUIH and NAL**

Native American Lifelines (NAL) is one of 41 Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) funded by the Indian Health Service. Native Americans Lifelines operates two outreach and referral clinics in two states but is recognized as only one facility by the Indian Health Service. NAL receives less than \$1 million to serve all urban Indians in Baltimore (including Washington, DC) and Boston. The mission

of Native American Lifelines is to promote health and social resiliency within Urban American Indian communities. Native American Lifelines applies principles of trauma informed care to provide culturally centered behavioral health, dental, outreach and referral services.

The National Council of Urban Indian Health is the national non-profit organization devoted to the support and development of quality, accessible, and culturally-competent health and public health services for American Indians and Alaska Natives living in urban areas. NCUIH strives to improve the health of all AI/ANs, including the over 70% of the AI/AN population that lives in urban areas, supported by quality, accessible health care centers.

NCUIH was recently named a founding member of the President's COVID-19 Community Corps.â€

To Schedule Your Appointment and Learn More Visit [NCUIH.org/Vaccine](https://ncuih.org/Vaccine)

- Schedule an appointment
- Volunteer at a clinic
- Learn more about NCUIH's advocacy efforts