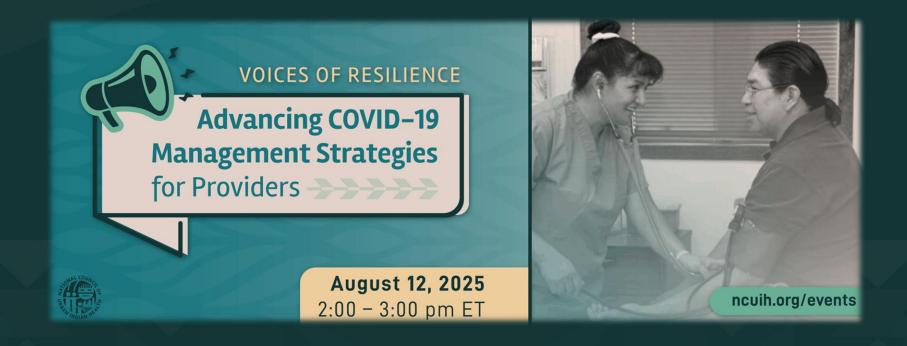


# Advancing COVID-19 Management Strategies for Providers



**Alyssa Smith-Longee,** MPH, BSN, RN, CPN (Assiniboine/Sioux – Fort Peck)

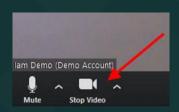


## Recording

Please note that today's session will be recorded for educational and quality improvement purposes.

Please turn on your video to help us engage with you.





Please mute your microphone when you are not speaking.



Please enter your name, organization, and tribal affiliations (if any) in the chat.





#### Welcome!

#### Agenda

- Overview & Introduction
- 2. Presentation
- 3. Resources
- 4. Open Floor
- 5. Closing

#### **Objectives**

- 1. Increase provider knowledge of early COVID-19 diagnosis strategies.
- 2. Support COVID-19 management practices among urban AI/AN health care providers.
- 3. Share best practices for managing COVID-19 in patients with comorbidities.



## Land Acknowledgement

The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) recognizes its presence and work within a larger framework of historical and contemporary relationships with Tribes and communities across the United States. NCUIH acknowledges that our national office and nearby activities are situated on the traditional homelands of many Native nations. Some of the communities in the surrounding area include the Piscataway, Pamunkey, Nentego, Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Monacan, and Powhatan peoples. These lands have deep historical, cultural, and spiritual significance to Native peoples.

NCUIH acknowledges that it operates near numerous Tribal Nations and urban Native communities across the country. Our work touches the lives of Native people from diverse Tribal backgrounds, and we are committed to honoring and respecting the unique cultural and historical connections that exist within these communities.

NCUIH is dedicated to promoting the health, well-being, and self-determination of urban Native American communities across the United States. We take our role of supporting these communities seriously and pledge to continue working towards a future of health equity, cultural preservation, and mutual respect.



# NCUHH

NATIONAL COUNCIL of URBAN INDIAN HEALTH

NCUIH is a national representative advocating for the 41 Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) contracting with the Indian Health Service (IHS) under the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA). NCUIH strives to improve the health of the over 70% of the AI/AN population that lives in urban areas, supported by quality health care centers.



# Updates on COVID-19

# Updates to Vaccine Recommendations



- On May 27, 2025, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced that the CDC would no longer recommend the COVID-19 vaccine for healthy children and healthy pregnant women.
- ❖ CDC recommends a 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine for most adults ages 18 and older. Parents of children ages 6 months to 17 years should discuss the benefits of vaccination with a healthcare provider.

- COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations: <u>Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines | COVID-19 | CDC</u>
- Updated Vaccination Schedules: <a href="mailto:limmunizations">Immunizations</a> | CDC



### COVID-19 Burden

#### **COVID-19** continues to impact Americans' health.

Preliminary 2024-2025 U.S. COVID-19 Burden Estimates

CDC estimates\* that, from October 1, 2024 through June 7, 2025, there have been:

9.8 million-16.1 million



COVID-19

2.4 million-3.8 million



**Outpatient Visits** 

270,000-440,000



COVID-19 Hospitalizations

32,000-51,000



COVID-19 Deaths

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/covid/php/surveillance/burden-estimates.html

<sup>\*</sup> Based on data from September 29, 2024 through June 7, 2025.



## COVID-19 Landscape

As reported by UIO Healthcare Professionals

#### Survey

NCUIH COVID-19 Survey disseminated virtually in March 2025 that recorded responses from 43 UIO Healthcare Professionals

#### **Listening Session**

Listening Session in April at the 2025 NCUIH conference with polling questions and live dialogue with ~150 attendees.

### Survey Design



- NCUIH developed an online survey to gather insights from UIO healthcare professionals involved in the prevention and/or management of COVID-19.
- This survey aimed to identify existing barriers to COVID-19 confidence and educational needs related to COVID-19 management.
- ❖ The survey was shared across NCUIH communication channels in March 2025
- \* This survey utilized a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions focused on 7 key areas:
  - Professional background
  - COVID-19 vaccine confidence
  - Barriers to COVID-19 vaccine uptake
  - Challenges to early COVID-19 diagnosis and/or treatment
  - \* Referral to other clinics
  - COVID-19 education needs
  - Feedback on COVID-19 resource use



### Demographics

- Of the 77 individuals who attempted to participate in the survey, 34 were deemed ineligible based on screening questions and 43 were eligible to proceed to complete the survey
- Respondents represented various UIO facility types:
  - ❖ Full Ambulatory (55.8%)
  - Limited Ambulatory (16.3%)
  - Outreach and Referral (51.2%)
  - Outpatient and/or Residential Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment (18.6%)

#### Responses to "What is your role? Please select all that apply."

n (% of N)
2 (4.6%)
9 (20.9%)
1 (2.3%)
10 (23.2%)
22 (51.2%)
43

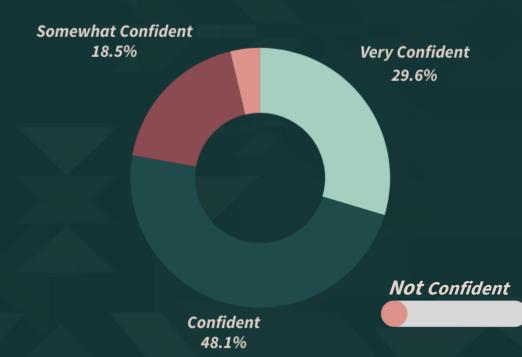
\*Of those who reported "Other" the majority consisted of admin or leadership roles and other clinical roles not listed above (lab tech, medical assistance, CNA, case manager, etc.).



# Confidence in COVID-19 Management & Treatment

3.7%

Provider Confidence in Managing and Treating Patients Diagnosed with COVID-19

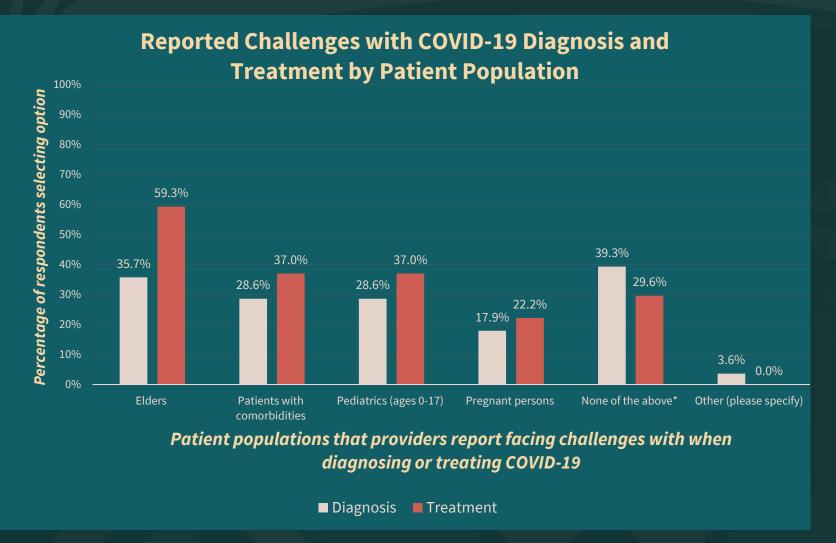


#### **Key Takeaways:**

- More than ¾ of respondents feel "Confident" or "Very Confident" in managing and treating COVID-19
- Only 3.7% of respondents felt "Not Confident" with managing and treating patients diagnosed with COVID-19



## Diagnosis & Treatment Challenges



#### **Key Takeaways:**

- More respondents
   selected each patient
   population for treatment
   challenges than
   diagnosis challenges
- The greatest proportion of respondents selected "Elders" for challenges with both diagnosis and treatment compared to all other patient populations



## Diagnosis & Treatment Challenges



- Greatest challenges in both treating and diagnosing COVID-19 included delayed patient presentation to healthcare facilities
- Limited access to COVID-19 testing was a highly reported challenge to COVID-19 diagnosis, and limited awareness of COVID-19 treatment options was a highly reported challenge to COVID-19 treatment
- Funding was also identified as a challenge to COVID-19 diagnosis



## Early Diagnosis

Improving Delayed Patient Presentation

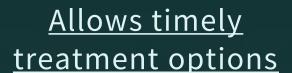


## Early Diagnosis Benefits



## Improves prognosis and reduces severity

Especially in patients at risk of developing severe illness (e.g., elders, comorbidities, immunocompromising conditions)



Don't delay, treatment must be started as soon as possible and within 5-7 days of symptom onset



### Allows proactive measures

Allows proactive measures to minimize spread of the virus to others in their circle

## **Testing Recommendations**



- Viral tests are used as a diagnostic to detect current infection with SARS-CoV-2
  - Molecular (nucleic acid amplification test [NAAT], such as polymerase chain reaction [PCR])
  - Antigen tests
- Vaccination does not affect the results of someone's SARS-CoV-2 NAAT, antigen, or other diagnostic tests
- \* The CDC recommends early testing for all people who experience COVID-19 symptoms, particularly those at risk for severe illness:
  - Age is the strongest risk factor for severe COVID-19
  - Patients with underlying conditions
  - Race and ethnic background



Source: CDC, 2024

<sup>1.</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, May 8). COVID-19 treatments and medications. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/covid/treatment/index.html

<sup>2.</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, March 10). COVID-19 testing: What you need to know. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/covid/testing/index.html#cdc\_testing\_results-getting-a-covid-19-test





- Symptoms can be difficult to differentiate from, and can overlap with, other viral respiratory illnesses such as influenza (flu) and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
- ❖ COVID-19 can also vary from asymptomatic to critical illness; symptoms and severity can change during the illness
  - Close follow-up is needed, especially for at risk individuals
- Consider testing for other illnesses with similar symptoms
  - For many diseases, including flu, early diagnosis and prompt treatment can be important for preventing severe illness





As reported by UIO Healthcare Professionals

- Delayed patient presentation to facility
- Elders and community members located far from facility
  - Transportation barrier
- Limited Access to testing
- Overlap between COVID-19 symptoms and chronic conditions
- Limited awareness of COVID-19 symptoms among patients
- Mistrust in government and healthcare systems
- Lack of Native imagery and resources that community members connect with

### Early Diagnosis Strategies



As reported by UIO Healthcare Professionals

#### **Accessibility/Resources**

- Access to testing/ at home testing kits (include educational materials in testing kits)
- Transportation support
- Community outreach, frequent reminders, and patient education on importance of early testing using multiple messaging tools that are culturally responsive and accessible

#### **Education and Training**

- Trainings for providers on symptoms and treatment options
- Education to patients/ community members on symptoms
- Utilizing materials and visual resources
   (fact sheets, one pagers, brochures, verbal reminders during appointments) around
   COVID-19 symptoms and testing
   indications

#### Early Diagnosis Strategies (cont'd)



As reported by UIO Healthcare Professionals

#### Other

- Reducing stigma and fear around COVID-19
- Pre-Appointment Screenings for Symptoms
- Build rapport and a patient-provider trust relationship



Source: NCUIH

#### Quotes



...from survey respondents and listening session participants on early diagnosis strategies

"More education of symptoms and letting them know not to wait for treatment as it may not just be allergies."



NCUIH COVID-19
Survey Respondent



"Coverage of treatment medication and education material that shows need for early detection."

NCUIH COVID-19
Survey Respondent



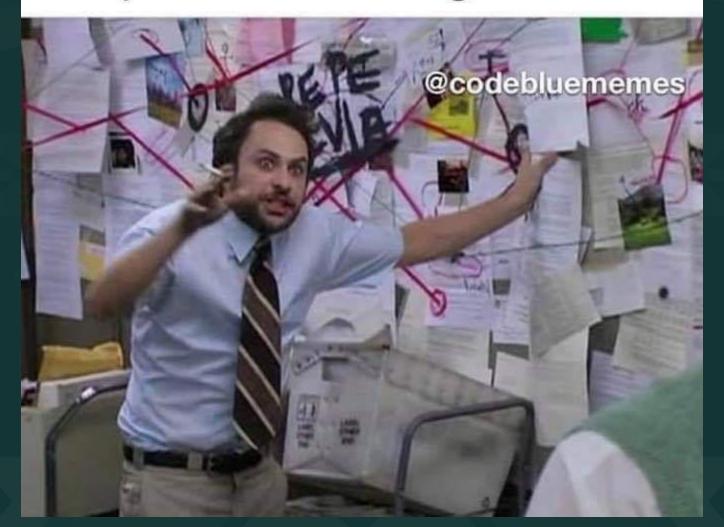
"Normalizing the conversation on getting tested and being proactive about medical care."





## Brain Break

Me trying to explain the COVID-19 policies that were changed 6 times today to the oncoming shift







# COVID-19 Management Practices

In Outpatient Settings

## COVID-19 Treatment Clinical Care for Outpatients



- Patients at higher risk for severe COVID-19 might benefit from outpatient treatment
- Clinicians should consider COVID-19 treatment in patients with mild or moderate COVID-19 who have one or more risk factors for severe COVID-19 to reduce progression to hospitalization and death
- Treatment must be started as soon as possible and within 5-7 days of symptom onset



Source: NCUIH





Risk factors for severe COVID-19, such as illness requiring hospitalization, include:

- Age over 50 years, with risk increasing substantially as age increases above
   65 years
- Being unvaccinated or not being up to date on recommended COVID-19 vaccinations
- Specific medical conditions, with risk increasing substantially with presence of multiple medical conditions
- Immunocompromising conditions or use of immunosuppressive medications, such as chemotherapy

#### Clinical Considerations for Special Populations



- There are additional considerations for specific people diagnosed with COVID-19
- Pregnant and recently pregnant persons (at least 6 weeks following the end of pregnancy) are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19
  - Per CDC, "it is not recommended to withhold COVID-19 treatment from pregnant or lactating women because of theoretical safety concerns. In general, the therapeutic management of pregnant women with COVID-19 is the same as management of women who are not pregnant."
- Most children experience asymptomatic, mild, or moderate COVID-19 illness, but some children can experience severe illness



Source: NCUIH

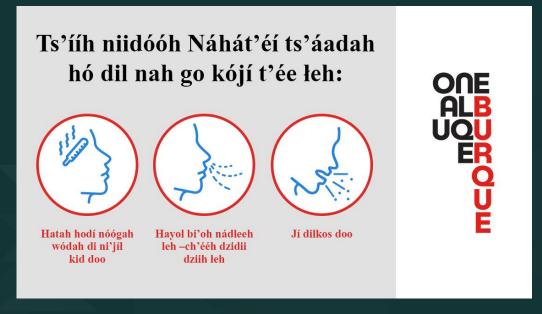
#### Treatment options for COVID-19

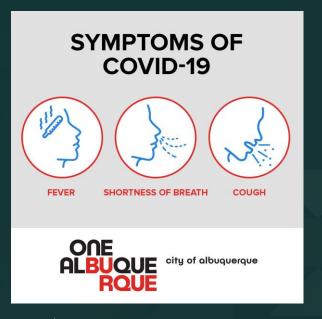
Treatment	Who	Route	Duration	Time from Illness Onset	Specific Issues	
Nirmatrelvir- Ritonavir (Paxlovid) □	Adults; children aged 12 years and older and at least 40kg	Oral	5 days	≤5 days	Adjust dosing in some cases; <u>drug-drug</u> <u>interactions</u> ☑; severe kidney and liver contraindications; no specific testing required before initiation	
Remdesivir (Veklury) PDF	Adults; children aged 28 days and older and at least 3kg	Intravenous	3 days	≤7 days	Infusion over 30-120 minutes; infusion over 3 consecutive days; need to check liver function and prothrombin time before initiation	
Recommended to use if above medications cannot be used or are unavailable.						
Molnupiravir (Lagrevio) ☑	Adults	Oral	5 days	≤5 days	Women who are able to become pregnant and their partners should use birth control; avoid in pregnant women; no specific testing required before initiation	





All patients with symptomatic COVID-19 should be offered symptom management with over-the-counter antipyretics, analgesics, or antitussives for fever, headache, myalgias, and cough if indicated





Source: City of Albuquerque, Symptoms of COVID-19 (Diné and English)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, July 8). COVID-19 Treatment Clinical Care for outpatients: Outpatient treatment of COVID-19. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/covid/hcp/clinical-care/outpatient-treatment.htmlCOVID-19">https://www.cdc.gov/covid/hcp/clinical-care/outpatient-treatment.htmlCOVID-19</a> Treatment Clinical Care for Outpatients | COVID-19 | CDC

<sup>2.</sup> City of Albuquerque Office of Emergency Management. (n.d.). COVID-19 symptoms infographic [Image]. City of Albuquerque. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from <a href="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management/covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://documents.cabq.gov/emergency-management-covid="https://docume

#### **COVID-19 Plant Medicines**



- Lakota/Dakota plant medicines that Linda Black Elk, Traditional ethnobotanist uses for COVID-19 infection
  - Powerful anti-inflammatory species: wormwood, goldenrod, yarrow, gumweed, and stinging nettle, as well as the healing influence of yarrow as a secondary benefit and details the specific effects of each plant medicine on the body
- Additionally, a general antiviral remedy called "fire cider" made of a mixture of pungent, hot, spicy ingredients in apple cider vinegar, which can also be taken with the covid remedy



Visit the <u>Native Memory Project</u> to learn from Linda Black Elk, Traditional Ethnobotanist and John Mionczynski, Ethnobotanist on COVID-19 Plant Medicines.

https://nativememoryproject.org/plant/covid-19-plantmedicines/

#### **COVID-19 Management Challenges**



As reported by UIO Healthcare Providers

- Delayed diagnosis/delayed patient presentation
- Lack of desire from patients to come get tested
- "People thinking COVID-19 is over"
- Transportation barriers
- Mistrust in government and healthcare systems

"With the reduction in symptoms the community does not want to test or receive vaccines."

- Listening session respondent

### Covid-19 Management Strategies



As reported by UIO Healthcare Providers

Staying up to date on new therapies

Social Media Toolkits specific information for patients and families

Education and focused season education

Access to vaccines

"Listen, educate, and have empathy" Reducing stigma and fear around COVID-19 Community outreach and frequent reminders

Culturally relevant training and materials for both providers and patients



## Resources



## New Podcast Episode!

#### NCUIH NATIVE HEALTHCAST



**PRESENTS** 

#### COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS



**FEATURING NCUIH SPEAKERS** 

Alyssa Smith-Longee, MPH, BSN, RN, CPN
(Assiniboine/Sioux - Fort Peck)
Public Health Program Manager



**Dr. Kimberly Fowler, PhD**Vice President of the Technical
Assistance and Research Center

Listen Now: <u>ncuih.org/media-and-events/podcast</u>

#### **IMPROVE**

## VACCINE CONFIDENCE

with Motivational Interviewing



Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a communication technique used by healthcare providers to help patients make positive health behavior changes. It's especially useful when patients are hesitant, doubtful or resistant to change. This approach allows providers to engage with their patients using an approach that is patient-centered, non-judgmental, and empathetic. The patient's goals are at the forefront, and through respectful and collaborative communication, patients are empowered to make informed decisions that focus on their autonomy.

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ncuih.org/vaccine

#### **MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING**

STRATEGIES

000000000000000



#### **Build Rapport**

Establishes partnership and collaboration.

**Example(s):** It is great to see you again...How is your day going...What are your priorities today?



#### **Open-Ended Questions**

Invites the patient to tell their story and uncovers personal beliefs and fears.

**Example(s):** What do you already know about the COVID-19 vaccine? Tell me about your previous experience with the COVID-19 vaccine.



#### **Affirmations**

Validates the patient's strengths and experiences, and helps build confidence in being involved in their care.

**Example(s):** Your health is very important to you...You already have a lot of knowledge.



#### **Reflections/Reflective Listening**

Invites exploration through active listening, interpreting the conversation, and expressing understanding. Allows the patient to share accuracy of your reflections.

**Example(s):** It seems that (or I am hearing that) you're afraid of vaccine side effects.



#### **Summaries**

Confirms understanding of the interaction and invites elaboration.

**Example(s):** What matters to you is...This impacts you because...Let's go over what you said about the COVID-19 vaccine...

## Motivational Interviewing



Motivational Interviewing is a communication technique used by healthcare providers to help patients make positive health behavior changes. Visit this one-pager to learn more about how you can incorporate these techniques into your conversations around vaccines with your patients and community.

https://ncuih.org/vaccine/

## Motivational Interviewing

Improve vaccine confidence through the utilization of O.A.R.S. skills. OARS are core communication skills frequently utilized in motivational interviewing approaches that can facilitate positive interactions and rapport building with patients.

https://ncuih.org/vaccine/



### Motivational Interviewing Skills for Vaccine Confidence

**Motivational Interviewing** is a communication technique used by healthcare providers that is **patient-centered, collaborative, non-judgmental, and empathetic**. This helps encourage patients to make **positive health behavior changes.** OARS are core communication skills frequently utilized in motivational interviewing approaches that can facilitate positive interactions and rapport building with patients.





## Stay Up to Date

- ❖ CDC COVID-19 information hub with specific sections and resources for Healthcare Providers: <u>Site Index | COVID-19 | CDC</u>
- COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations: <u>Staying Up to Date with COVID-19</u>
  <u>Vaccines | COVID-19 | CDC</u>
- Vaccination Schedules: <u>Immunization Schedules | Vaccines & Immunizations | CDC</u>
  - You can contact the CDC directly for COVID-19 questions here: Email CDC-INFO | CDC-INFO.
  - The question will then get routed to the correct group for response.



#### Want to Learn More?

Join us on September 16 from 2–3 p.m. ET where we will do a deeper dive on motivational interviewing and how it can help address vaccine hesitancy!

#### PATHWAY TO VACCINE CONFIDENCE:

Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy
Through Motivational Interviewing

September 16, 2025 2:00 - 3:00 pm ET







# Open Floor

Please feel free to ask questions or share any final thoughts!



#### "The effect of covid is still being felt today, we are still feeling the after shock."

- Listening session respondent



## One-On-One Technical Assistance Available

https://ncuih.org/training/one-on-one/

- The Technical Assistance and Research Center (TARC) provides individualized technical assistance, training, and support to member UIOs.
- ❖ If your UIO would like further assistance related to COVID-19 vaccines, diagnosis and management, submit a <u>TA request form</u> today or reach out to Alyssa Smith-Longee at <u>alongee@ncuih.org</u>.





ncuih.org/subscribe



## **Upcoming Events**

#### Interested in attending more NCUIH events?

Visit <u>ncuih.org/events</u> to learn about more upcoming events, such as:

- ➤ September 16, 2025: Pathway to Vaccine Confidence: Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy through Motivational Interviewing
- October 20, 2025: NCUIH In-Person Event: Urban Indian Organization Caucus + Tacos
- > April 27 April 30, 2026: 2026 NCUIH Annual Conference



## Thank You!

Please provide feedback on today's event by scanning the QR code or using the link in the chat.

This information will also be shared via email.



#### References



- 1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, July 8). COVID-19 Treatment Clinical Care for outpatients: Outpatient treatment of COVID-19. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/covid/hcp/clinical-care/outpatient-treatment.htmlCOVID-19">https://www.cdc.gov/covid/hcp/clinical-care/outpatient-treatment.htmlCOVID-19</a> Treatment Clinical Care for Outpatients | COVID-19 | CDC
- 2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, May 8). COVID-19 treatments and medications. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/covid/treatment/index.html
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## NCUIL

NATIONAL COUNCIL of URBAN INDIAN HEALTH