

Addressing COVID-19 in



North Dakota Special Populations

January 2021 - June 2024

HEALTH EQUITY UNIT
STRATEGIC PLAN

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BACKGROUND

Health equity is the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. North Dakota Health and Human Services (NDHHS) Health Equity Unit (HEU) works to understand and reduce health disparities among all North Dakotans. The primary goal is to reduce rates of disease by providing opportunities for interventions and improving access to health care. This will ensure all North Dakotans receive the highest quality of health. The NDHHS HEU continually measures our progress toward the goals in this plan through weekly team trackers (see Appendix A).

The Health Equity Unit consists of:

- Krissie Guerard, MS – Health Equity Director
- Alicia Belay, MPH, PhD – Public Health Specialist
- Jordan Laducer – Special Populations Coordinator
- Kiamya Philson – (Former) Health Equity Immunization Coordinator
- Katarina Domitrovich, MPH – Health Equity Coordinator
- Cathony Reid, MPH – (Former) Health Equity CDC Public Health Associate
- Beverly Ijeoma Anaele, MPH – Health Equity CDC Public Health Associate
- Ruth Nwatu – Health Equity CDC Public Health Associate
- Cheyenne Smith – Tribal Health Liaison
- Sonya Abe – Tribal Health Liaison
- Jamie Thongphet – Tribal Health Liaison
- Donald “Hunter” Parisien – Tribal Health Liaison
- Sargam Ghimire, MPH – New American/Foreign Born/Immigrant (NFI) Liaison
- Valentina Asiedu – Intern, HEU
- Julia Wilson-Peltier – Intern, HEU
- Juliana Antwi – Intern, HEU

- Morgan Pizur-Kranz – (Former) Intern, HEU
- Payton Drent– Intern, HEU
- Raleigh Chase – (Former) Intern, HEU
- Adebanjo Adeyeye – Intern, HEU

The Office of the State Epidemiologist (OSE) implements programs and conducts inquiries and investigations involving health-related issues and disease outbreaks (infectious, environmental and chronic). The OSE serves as an epidemiological resource for the Sections and Divisions of North Dakota Health and Human Services and other state/local agencies. Data in this report is provided by the OSE. Contributing data authors include:

- Tracy Miller, MPH, PhD – State Epidemiologist
- Grace Njau, MPH – Director, Special Projects and Health Analytics
- Kodi Pinks
- Slate Boyer

BACKGROUND

In the United States as of October 6, 2022, there have been 96,363,451 documented cases of COVID-19 and 1,056,029 deaths.¹ Since March 11, 2020, when the World Health Organization declared the virus a global pandemic, COVID-19 fatality and hospitalization rates have been on the rise.² Nationally, underlying racial inequities continue to express disproportionate mortality rates among racial and ethnic populations.

Data Behind COVID-19 Inequities

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and several peer-reviewed studies have identified factors that contribute to increased COVID-19 exposure as associated with specific social determinants of health.³ Some of these factors include the physical environment and neighborhood, discrimination, health care access and utilization, education, income, housing and occupation.³ Physical environments identified as high-deprivation areas due to social and economic inequities tend to have more communities of color and COVID-19 incidence. In addition, shared or congregate housing contributes to COVID-19 transmission rates.³ Racial and ethnic minority populations are more likely to live in such settings based on cultural values, disproportionate unemployment levels that lead to homelessness and inequitable incarceration rates.

Likewise, many populations external to racial and ethnic groups also experience increased challenges due to the ongoing pandemic. These cohorts include LGBTQ2S+ populations, persons with disabilities, and persons who inject drugs. Published research indicates that LGBTQ2S+ youth and adults are at an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 and harmful economic impacts due to greater employment likelihood in heavily affected industries.⁴ These industries include restaurants and food services, hospitals, educational institutions, and retail

1. "CDC COVID Data Tracker." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed October 7, 2022. https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesper100klast7days

2. Cucinotta, Domenico, and Maurizio Vanelli. "WHO Declares COVID-19 a Pandemic." *Acta Biomedica*. U.S. National Library of Medicine, March 19, 2020. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32191675/>.

3. "COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, December 10, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/racial-ethnic-disparities/increased-risk-exposure.html>.

4. "The Lives and Livelihoods of Many in the LGBTQ Community Are at Risk Amidst COVID-19 Crisis." HRC. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lives-and-livelihoods-of-many-in-the-lgbtq-community-are-at-risk-amidst-covid-19-crisis>.

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industries.⁴ Additionally, almost one out of every ten persons in this community are unemployed and one out of five live in poverty.⁴ Therefore, these individuals may face difficulties with health care access due to a potential lack of insurance coverage.

Although effective communication is vital to sharing important information on COVID-19, persons with disabilities are sometimes excluded from this communication chain because accessibility features for the visually, cognitive or hearing impaired do not always exist.⁵ Moreover, access to health care in some cases has worsened for this population. For example, areas where only drive-up testing is available may not accommodate persons whose only mode of transportation comes from state mobility vehicles.⁵

For persons who inject drugs, COVID-19 may also disproportionately affect quality of life and access to care. Research indicates that this population has a high prevalence of various immunocompromising conditions such as HIV, tuberculosis and viral hepatitis that increase the virus' severity.⁶ Moreover, the risk of disease contraction is also high due to inequities in incarceration rates, homelessness, overcrowded living environments and other social determinants of health.⁶ Due to historical stigmatization in health care, persons who inject drugs may also be less likely to seek out care when needed.⁶

Statewide COVID-19 Inequities

In North Dakota, COVID-19 fatality and hospitalization rates also statistically differ by race. As of November 7, 2022, known people of color constituted roughly 9.3% of all COVID-19 deaths despite composing only 14.3% of the state's 762,062 population⁷ (Table 1).

4. "The Lives and Livelihoods of Many in the LGBTQ Community Are at Risk Amidst COVID-19 Crisis." HRC. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lives-and-livelihoods-of-many-in-the-lgbtq-community-are-at-risk-amidst-covid-19-crisis>.

5. "COVID-19 Poses Unique Challenges for People with Disabilities." The Hub. John Hopkins University, April 23, 2020. <https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/04/23/how-covid-19-affects-people-with-disabilities/>.

6. Vasylyeva, Tetyana, Pavlo Smyrnov, Steffanie Strathdee, and Samuel Friedman. "Challenges Posed by COVID-19 to People Who Inject Drugs and Lessons from Other Outbreaks." *Journal of the International AIDS Society*. U.S. National Library of Medicine, July 23, 2020. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32697423/>.

7. "North Dakota 2019 1-Year ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates." United States Census Bureau, 2019. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=north+dakota+population>.





BACKGROUND

American Indians had a 4.07% hospitalization rate and a 0.89% fatality rate (Table 1). Age-adjusted COVID-19 mortality rate displays the greatest burden among non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) residents in ND at a level statistically higher than US national data (Figure 1). When delineated by age group, data depicts that non-Hispanic AI/AN adults aged 35-44 years are overrepresented in deaths compared to their population distribution and other races in ND (Figure 2). These data and published national reports from organizations like the Commonwealth Fund and the CDC strongly suggest a need for tailored interventions to mitigate COVID-19 transmission and mortality rates among AI/AN communities.^{8,9}

In response to increased challenges and disparities in care for special populations, North Dakota Health and Human Services (NDHHS) has established the following strategic plan. This plan serves as a structured outline of specific, practical steps that the Health Equity Unit will engage upon, many of which have already taken place. These initiatives were formulated based on the communicated needs of ND populations described below and will take place with their active involvement. The NDHHS is committed to providing evidence-based strategies tailored to specific cultures and communities that improve health outcomes.

The North Dakota COVID Special Populations Strategic Plan will address the concerns found in the data presented at this moment in time and address the specific concerns expressed by North Dakota's Special Populations related to COVID-19. As a living document, this plan and associated target dates may be modified to reflect community needs.

Please note the following identifiers for funding sources:

-  = COVID-19 Vaccination Supplemental Funding
-  = Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases (ELC) Funding
-  = ELC Work Plan Activities
-  = Health Equity CDC COVID Grant

BACKGROUND

Table 1 North Dakota COVID-19 fatality and hospitalization rate by race as of November 7, 2022.

Race	Total Positives	Deaths	Hospitalized	Fatality Rate (%)	Hospitalization Rate (%)
2 or More	14,612	44	352	0.30	2.41
American Indian	17,224	154	701	0.89	4.07
Asian	3,309	8	71	0.24	2.15
Black	8,222	17	208	0.21	2.53
White	208,891	1,903	7,006	0.91	3.35
Unknown	21,730	269	510	1.24	2.35
Other	43	*	*	0.00	2.33

*Numbers less than five are not publicly reported and have been omitted accordingly.

BACKGROUND

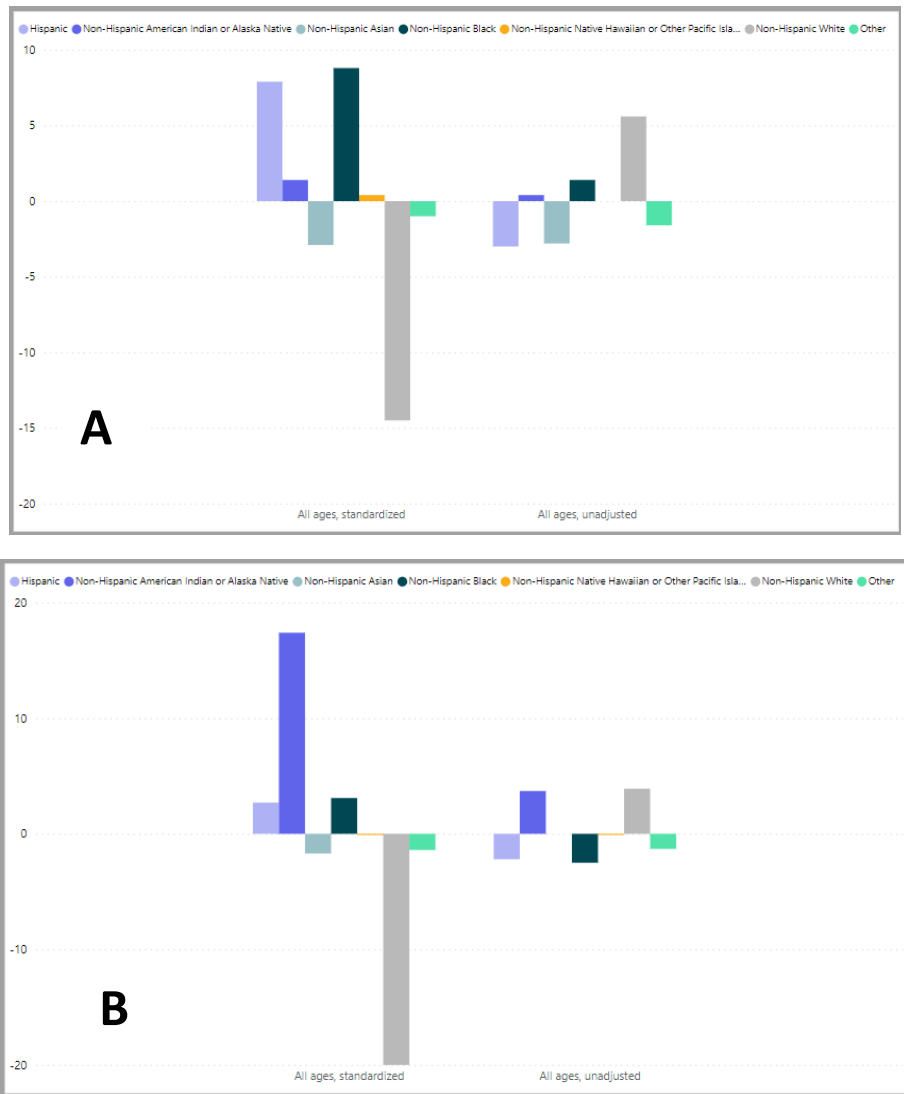


Figure 1 Difference between the percent of COVID-19 deaths and the population distributions by race and Hispanic origin: the impact of adjusting for age for **(A)** United States and **(B)** North Dakota as of November 2, 2022.

Source: Health Disparities: Race and Hispanic Origin, data received and coded as of 11/2/2022. Retrieved on 11/7/2022 from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid19/health_disparities.htm. Data are incomplete because of lag of 1-2 weeks between when death occurred and when data certificate is completed and submitted to the National Center for Health Statistics for processing.

BACKGROUND

Figure 1 (cont.) The burden of deaths due to COVID-19 is higher among AI/AN people in ND. The difference between % of COVID-19 deaths and population distribution by race, age-adjusted (controlling for difference in population age distributions) is high for Hispanics & AI/ANs in ND; for ND Hispanics, the disparity is 5.2% lower than it is nationally; for ND AI/ANs, the disparity in ND is much higher than nationally (16.0% higher). The most recent research on death certificate misclassification depicts underreporting by 33% for non-Hispanic AI/AN, 3% for non-Hispanic API, and 3% for Hispanic descendants.

BACKGROUND

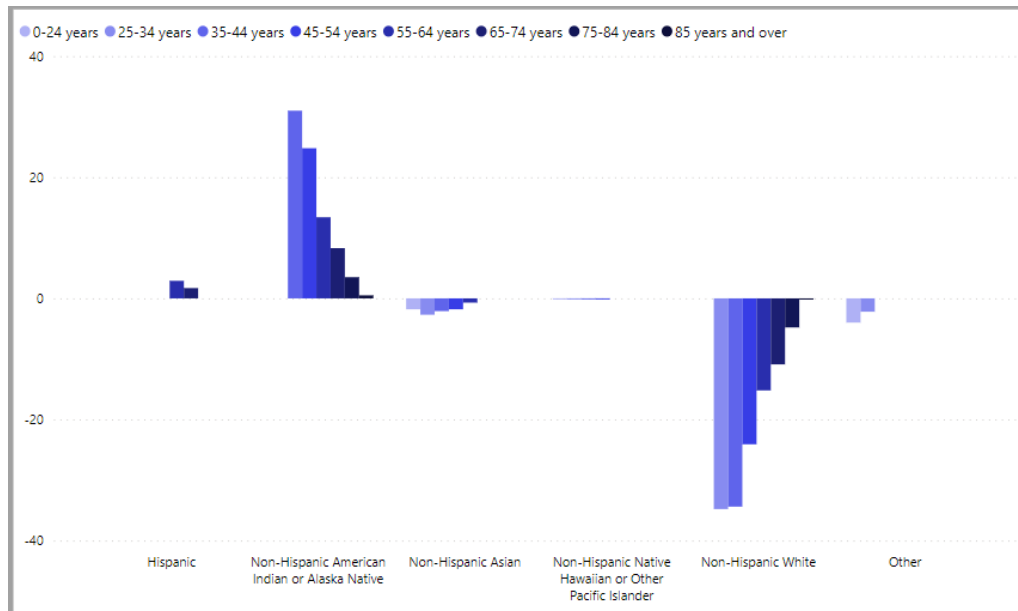


Figure 2 Age-specific differences between the percent of COVID-19 deaths and the population distribution, grouped by race and Hispanic origin in ND as of November 2, 2022. Looking at deaths by race/ethnicity and age show that ND AI/AN ages 35-54 are dramatically overrepresented among deaths compared to their population distribution in that age group. There is a 31.0% difference in deaths in the 35-44 age group than would be expected by the population distribution of AI/AN in this age group. The deaths of elders and others in tribal nations sharing geography with ND are devastating to these communities. Partnerships with tribal communities to learn how best to ameliorate inequities is needed.

HEALTH EQUITY UNIT

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Have a written plan to address high-risk and specific populations (including older adults) and how to reach each group, including congregate settings (e.g., correctional facilities), homeless populations, essential workers, and others</i>						
C Establish a plan to address COVID-19 in special populations	The Health Equity Unit	March 1, 2021	COVID-19 special population plan Baseline: plan available and addresses all populations		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Support public health workforce recruitment and training including working with health providers from rural communities, communities of color, and/or communities of high social vulnerability</i>						
E W Record a one-hour cultural competency training for Local Public Health Units (LPHU) The training will be mandatory for LPHU staff as part of the contracts they receive with the Enhanced ELC Detection Expansion funding	Krissie Guerard	June 30, 2021	Training development is completed. 75% of LPHU staff completed training by December 31, 2021 Pre and Posttest survey (required) measuring cultural competency has been completed by 100% of training participants Baseline: N/A	The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C Increase vaccinations through contracts with FQHCs and/or local healthcare providers to conduct vaccinations to reach the most	The Health Equity Unit	June 2021 to June 2024	200 additional vaccinations are given through contracted clinics monthly. Baseline: TBD using NDIIS		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
vulnerable populations						
H Analyze and disseminate data related to geographical disparities in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, mortality and vaccine uptake.	Grace Njau	September 2021 to May 2023	Analytical and technical support. Create geographical models of vulnerability and inequities.	University of Tennessee, Knoxville Geospatial Analysis Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

HEALTH EQUITY UNIT

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Support public health workforce recruitment and training including working with health providers from rural communities, communities of color, and/or communities of high social vulnerability						
H Hire a Health Equity Communications Coordinator to develop COVID-19 resources and media for diverse populations in North Dakota	Marie Moe	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Translated services for PSAs, printed materials, website(s), etc. Culturally-appropriate messaging, videos, infographics and other social media graphics and research reports	NDHHS Communications Office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
H Hire a COVID-19 Quality Improvement Coordinator to research and produce COVID-19 mitigation strategies	Kelly Nagel	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Collected population data on COVID-19 mitigation strategies Collected data for response process improvement areas Developed COVID-19 quality improvement plans Integrated culturally-appropriate strategies in communication plans	NDHHS Systems and Performance NDHHS Communications Office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
H Assess, recommend and support the physical improvement of existing Critical Access Hospital plants to increase the quality and efficiency of prevention and treatment services during the COVID-19 response, along with other emergencies	Katarina Domitrovich	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Strategic analysis of plant needs A report of recommended modifications Significant physical modifications to 10 Critical Access Hospitals	University of North Dakota, Center for Rural Health Critical Access Hospitals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

HEALTH EQUITY UNIT

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Support public health workforce recruitment and training including working with health providers from rural communities, communities of color, and/or communities of high social vulnerability						
H Support the development of the NDHHS Research and Response section for enhanced COVID-19 testing among high-risk populations	Nicole Brunelle	August 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023	Section positions including Chief of Nursing, Administrative Assistant, Outreach & Surveillance and Medical Training & Support Improved COVID-19 testing opportunities in undeserved, high risk communities	NDHHS Research and Response Section	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H Enhance data software training, machine learning and maintenance for improved COVID-19 analysis	Tracy Miller; Kodi Pinks	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Eight epidemiologists trained in R, Python, SQL, and Azure Two epidemiologists trained in Maven Maven maintenance and additional users on Qualtrics and other software	NDHHS Office of the State Epidemiologist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H Incorporate COVID-19 supplements and racial, ethnic health questions into data collection surveys to contextualize specific needs or areas of concern for disproportionately-affected populations	Tracy Miller; Grace Njau	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Two implemented COVID-19 supplements into PRAMS Implemented COVID-19 supplements into BRFSS Two sexual orientation questions added into BRFSS	NDHHS Office of the State Epidemiologist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

HEALTH EQUITY UNIT

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Support public health workforce recruitment and training including working with health providers from rural communities, communities of color, and/or communities of high social vulnerability</i>						
H Support COVID-19 computational modeling, public and policy analysis and senior statistical assistance through contractual positions under the Division of Special Projects and Health Analytics	Grace Njau	July 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Three high-level contractors provided statistical and policy reports and other forms of support to the health department Contracts delivered for computational modeling, senior statistical and policy/public analysis support	NDHHS Division of Special Projects and Health Analytics North Dakota Health and Human Services Office of the State Epidemiologist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H Hire a Health Equity Training Coordinator to develop, organize and implement a health care provider training to enhance cultural humility, ultimately improving community trust among the underserved and bolstering COVID-19 vaccine uptake	Alicia Belay	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	A developed and piloted health equity training curriculum Ten trained NSDPQC Collaborative MDs who have completed at least six trainings within the state/year	Sacred Pipe NSDPQC Various community expert and health care leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
H Hire COVID-19 School Health Specialists to assure equitable prevention and control access among students	Kim Mertz	July 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023	Seven funded Regional Education Associations Increased COVID-19 testing, preventive care and disease management	North Dakota Regional Education Association	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Support public health workforce recruitment and training including working with health providers from rural communities, communities of color, and/or communities of high social vulnerability</i>						
			about high-risk students			

HEALTH EQUITY UNIT

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Support public health workforce recruitment and training including working with health providers from rural communities, communities of color, and/or communities of high social vulnerability</i>						
H Mobilize 28 Local Public Health Unit partners to develop a local Health Equity Strategic Plan addressing COVID-19 prevention strategies and supplemental infectious and chronic diseases through collaborations with FQHCs, NGOs, community-based and civic organizations and additional stakeholders	Katarina Domitrovich	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	28 contracts to North Dakota Local Public Health Hired agencies or staff persons for developing the Health Equity Strategic Plan A statewide Health Equity Strategic Plan that includes COVID-19 activities A Health Equity Champion at each Local Public Health unit	Local Public Health Federally Qualified Health Centers Various community-based and social service organizations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H Hire a Grants Management Specialist I to provide fiscal and contract management support for this grant	Lonny Mertz	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Hired for a full-time, non-permanent position Employee will work 50 percent on grant objectives		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Support public health workforce recruitment and training including working with health providers from rural communities, communities of color, and/or communities of high social vulnerability</i>						
H Contract with the University of North Dakota to work with population analytics graduate students on COVID-19 analysis	Grace Njau	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Analytical support to the Special Projects AH by collecting, analyzing and disseminating rurality data, inequities in access to care, and other COVID-19 outcomes. Quarterly progress reports received	University of North Dakota	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

HEALTH EQUITY UNIT

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Support public health workforce recruitment and training including working with health providers from rural communities, communities of color, and/or communities of high social vulnerability</i>						
H Contract with North Dakota State University to work with graduate student interns on vaccine hesitancy, COVID-19 education, and other forms of support	Alicia Belay; Katarina Domitrovich	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	COVID-19 support received from two graduate students	North Dakota State University	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
H Contract with the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists to provide one fellow to work on a tribal/race mis-classification project and develop an ongoing LGBTQS+ health report	Tracy Miller	June 1 to May 31, 2023	Fellow developed a tribal/race mis-classification project, a LGBTQ2S+ health report, and identified additional data sources Quarterly progress reports received	Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* This program will host a series of community organizers, providers, and faith leaders to discuss the importance of getting vaccinated. Each event will be geared toward the Black community and will provide a means to answer any lingering questions that attendees may have. Important resources such as masks and information on vaccination sites may be sent to attendees as well.

HEALTH EQUITY UNIT

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Continue and expand on the work of Vaccine Equity Committees (or similar committees) to ensure transparency and engagement with the community</i>						
C Hold bi-monthly Health Equity Leadership meetings	The Health Equity Unit	January 2021 to June 2024	40 meetings Baseline: twice per month		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Fund local education campaigns and approaches to adapting CDC materials to community audiences, including a focus on racial and ethnic minority groups</i>						
H Provide grant opportunities for North Dakotan college students to develop diverse COVID-19 studies and reports outlining health disparities between various populations	Tracy Miller	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	College students granted awards for COVID-19 studies on health disparities Produced reports delivered to the OSE	NDHHS Office of the State Epidemiologist North Dakota colleges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H Consult with KAT & Company for placement of COVID-19 messaging airtime	Krissie Guerard, Katarina Domitrovich	September 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Create and publicize a functional health communications app while consulting with community leaders. Provide monthly TA to manage content and improve engagement to communities utilizing the app.	KAT & Company	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

HEALTH EQUITY UNIT

	Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
	<i>Fund local education campaigns and approaches to adapting CDC materials to community audiences, including a focus on racial and ethnic minority groups</i>						
C	Continue the COVID-19 vaccine media campaign to increase rates that was started in January 2021 with previous funding	NDHHS	July 2022 to June 2024	Number of spots aired Baseline: N/A		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Fund local education campaigns and approaches to adapting CDC materials to community audiences, including a focus on racial and ethnic minority groups</i>						
H	Initiate a Mental/Behavioral Health Collaborative Care Consultation model with the University of North Dakota to address infrastructure gaps exposed through the COVID-19 pandemic	Katarina Domitrovich	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	A hired project coordinator A team of about 4-5 behavioral health experts Assisted rural and tribal health care providers in behavioral health care for patients	University of North Dakota, Center for Rural Health Rural and tribal care health care providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H	Contract with the NFI, LGBTQ2S+ and Youth Advisory Boards to create a health equity COVID-19 project	Krissie Guerard, Katarina Domitrovich	August 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	A health equity COVID-19 project from all three advisory boards that falls under one of the four overarching grant strategies		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H	Facilitate the development of Blue Zone community projects with particular focus on communities disproportionately-affected by COVID-19	Janna Pastir	June 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023	Hired and trained staff for workshop facilitation Blue Zone health system designation Improved economic recovery and community resilience	Division of Health Promotion Altru Health Foundation North Dakota State University Sharecare	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

HEALTH EQUITY UNIT

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Fund local education campaigns and approaches to adapting CDC materials to community audiences, including a focus on racial and ethnic minority groups</i>						
C Widely publicize the North Dakota COVID Vaccine Locator through partnerships and contracts with university systems, newspaper advertisements and billboards	NDHHS	June 2024	The North Dakota COVID Vaccine Locator is publicized through at least three different mechanisms throughout North Dakota Baseline: 0		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Fund partnerships for community engagement to identify trusted voices that represent the diversity of affected communities to promote vaccination</i>						
E *Contract with at least two North Dakota higher educational institutions to establish a paid Health Equity Ambassador program that will train and empower students to promote public health, including COVID-19 treatment and prevention	Beverly Anaele	May 31, 2023	Contract with at least two North Dakota higher educational institutions to establish a Health Equity Ambassador Program. These institutions will run an NDHHS-funded program to recruit a minimum of two students each. Number of student participants at community/campus events Baseline: N/A		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E W Promote COVID-19 vaccination in LPHU jurisdictions, address vaccine hesitancy and collaborate with special populations to ensure that county-level vaccination rates according to NDIIS do not vary by race or ethnicity	NDHHS and Kiamya Philson	February 2022	Partnerships formed and established with LPHUs Baseline: N/A	Local Public Health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Ambassadors will undergo both orientation and cultural humility training and will be expected to host at least two community/campus events throughout the one-year period. Examples of community events can include but are not limited to hosting public health discussions, distributing masks/hand sanitizers, and sharing educational material. These students will represent a diverse group of special populations (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities) to reach their various communities. Funding will pay for Ambassador salaries (minimum wage, ten hours/week) and resource needs. The framework for the program can come from the [Penn State Public Health Ambassador Program](#).

HEALTH EQUITY UNIT

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Fund partnerships for community engagement to identify trusted voices that represent the diversity of affected communities to promote vaccination</i>						
Meet with each Local Public Health Unit (as requested) to build relationship between the local and state levels while addressing funding questions and concerns.	Katarina Domitrovich and Jennifer Galbraith	August 2021 to May 31 2023	Meet as needed and as requested by LPH Baseline: 0	Local Public Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assist in organizing and promoting pop-up clinics for special populations to increase access to vaccination and alleviate transportation barriers while promoting population specific events	Kiamya Philson, Donald "Hunter" Parisien, Cheyenne Smith, Sonya Abe, Jamie Thongphet, Sargam Ghimire	April 2021 to June 2024	Pop-up clinics held as requested by communities Baseline: 0	Local Public Health, DOC Nurses, NDSU CIRE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

NEW AMERICAN/ FOREIGN-BORN/IMMIGRANTS (NFI)*

A New American is a “recent immigrant to the US or a child of a recent immigrant.”¹⁰
 To be foreign-born is to be “born in a country other than that in which one resides.”¹¹
 “An immigrant is a person living in a country other than that of his or her birth.”¹²

Action Steps/ Activities	Who’s Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Improve Vaccination Uptake						
Partner with community organizations to support culturally appropriate outreach through methods including radio and WhatsApp	Alicia Belay	March 31, 2021	At least one message has been disseminated with NDHHS partnership through communication channels appropriate for NFI communities Baseline: 0	NFI Advisory Board ESHARA partners NFI COVID Education & Quarantine Support Subtask force of the Red River Task Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C E Develop, translate, and publicly disseminate culturally appropriate materials in collaboration with community partners to dispel vaccine myths in NFI community	Alicia Belay	March 31, 2021	At least one document addressing myths regarding vaccination developed, available in at least five languages Baseline: 0	NFI Advisory Board ESHARA partners NFI COVID Education & Quarantine Support Subtask force of the Red River Task Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

10. “New American (Noun) American English Definition and Synonyms: Macmillan Dictionary.” Macmillan Dictionary. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/new-american>.

11. “Foreign-Born Definition.” Dictionary.com. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/foreign-born>.

12. Bolter, Jessica. “Explainer: Who Is An Immigrant?” Migration Policy Institute, February 2019. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/content/explainer-who-immigrant>.

*The mission of North Dakota Health and Human Services (NDHHS) New American/Foreign-Born/Immigrant (NFI) Advisory Board (Board) is to provide ongoing recommendations to the NDHHS. The Board will allow the NDHHS to integrate NFI concerns into policies and interventions and will provide a platform for NFI leaders to elevate concerns from the NFI communities. The Board will include persons representing NFI communities and will provide structure for ongoing dialogue with communities and other stakeholders. NFI members will have a key role in planning, decision-making and monitoring, as advisors on NFI issues to the NDHHS.

NEW AMERICAN/ FOREIGN-BORN/IMMIGRANTS (NFI)*

A New American is a “recent immigrant to the US or a child of a recent immigrant.”¹⁰
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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Improve Vaccination Uptake						
Identify most prominent vaccination concerns, myths and barriers to COVID-19 treatment or prevention with the NFI Advisory Board	Alicia Belay	March 31, 2021	At least five myths, concerns, and barriers identified during the January 2021 NFI Advisory Board meeting or from soliciting input from NFI members Baseline: 0	NFI Advisory Board members present at January 2021 meeting and through email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Establish mode of vaccination correspondence with the public using partner input in collaboration with the NDHHS Chief Communications Officer	Alicia Belay	March 31, 2021	At least one communication strategy is used specifically based on NFI Partner input to address vaccinations Baseline: 0	NDHHS Chief Communications Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

10. “New American (Noun) American English Definition and Synonyms: Macmillan Dictionary.” Macmillan Dictionary. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/new-american>.

11. “Foreign-Born Definition.” Dictionary.com. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/foreign-born>.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Improve Vaccination Uptake						
c Meet with NFI Advisory Board Task Force two times a month to address vaccine hesitancy and access while creating solutions to increase vaccination rates among the New American/ Foreign Born/Immigrant (NFI) population. One meeting will be for updates and the second meeting will be the interview process for the NFI COVID-19 Taskforce project. Meetings are able to change if necessary.	Alicia Belay (5 meetings through April 2021); Kiamya Philson (lead COVID-19 Task Force); Sargam Ghimire	February 2021 to June 2024	40 meetings Baseline: twice per month	NFI Advisory Board	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. “New American (Noun) American English Definition and Synonyms: Macmillan Dictionary.” Macmillan Dictionary. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/new-american>.

11. “Foreign-Born Definition.” Dictionary.com. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/foreign-born>.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Improve Vaccination Uptake</i>						
C E Identify and contract with key leaders in NFI communities to serve as spokespersons for vaccination in Grand Forks, Bismarck and Fargo NFI communities	Alicia Belay	December 2021	Three NFI leaders were identified to speak about vaccinations in three different ND areas Baseline: 0	Key leaders in NFI communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C Interview leaders in key NFI communities regarding vaccine confidence to identify solutions to increase rates	Alicia Belay	December 2021	10 interviews completed Baseline: 0	Key NFI communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

10. "New American (Noun) American English Definition and Synonyms: Macmillan Dictionary." Macmillan Dictionary. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/new-american>.

11. "Foreign-Born Definition." Dictionary.com. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/foreign-born>.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Improve Vaccination Uptake</i>						
Commission a Health Liaison to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccine messaging, education and awareness and other supportive services for New American/Foreign Born/Immigrant communities	Alicia Belay; Katarina Domitrovich	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Provide COVID-19 and other disease education and awareness deliverables to NFI communities	NDHHS Division of Disease Control Various community-based organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Identify NFI needs	New NFI Liaison		
			Assist in activity efforts in state's COVID-19 strategic plan			
			Conduct disease investigations for reportable conditions			
			Perform additional health equity duties as needed			

10. "New American (Noun) American English Definition and Synonyms: Macmillan Dictionary." Macmillan Dictionary. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/new-american>.

11. "Foreign-Born Definition." Dictionary.com. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/foreign-born>.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Improve Vaccination Uptake</i>						
E C Contract with community organization to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates through outreach and assistance with ride programs that bring NFI population to vaccination sites	Alicia Belay (through March 2021); Kiamya Philson; Sargam Ghimire	April 2021 to June 2024	NFI coverage rates are the same or higher as other North Dakotans At least 10 workshops held Baseline: TBD using NDIIS	LIRS/ESHARA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C Provide the NDHHS Division of Immunizations a report containing a summary of perceptions and barriers to COVID-19 vaccine	NFI Contractor	June 30, 2022	Completed report Baseline: N/A	NDHHS Division of Immunizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

10. “New American (Noun) American English Definition and Synonyms: Macmillan Dictionary.” Macmillan Dictionary. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/new-american>.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Improve Vaccination Uptake</i>						
C E Contract with organizations (i.e., community health centers) to increase vaccination rates, including outreach programs with healthcare facilities, such as ride programs, that bring NFI and rural populations vaccination	Alicia Belay (completed through March 2021), Kiamya Philson	January 2023	400 vaccinations are completed Baseline: 0	LIRS/ ESHARA partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C Identify five key messages to promote vaccination uptake	Alicia Belay (completed through March 2021) Kiamya Philson	Annually	Identify at least five messages or messaging strategies to increase vaccination uptake in NFI communities Baseline: 0	NFI Advisory Board	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. "New American (Noun) American English Definition and Synonyms: Macmillan Dictionary." Macmillan Dictionary. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/new-american>.

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	Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
C	Contract with Language Link to disseminate ten messages to increase vaccination in native languages of NFI Communities	Alicia Belay (completed through March 2021) Kiamya Philson and NDHHS Communications Team	April 2021 to June 2024	10 messages in six languages are disseminated within local communities Baseline: 0	Language Link	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E C	Contract with a radio station in Fargo that is able to translate broadcasts into 10 different languages	Alicia Belay (completed through May 2021), Kiamya Philson	July 2021 to June 2024	Number of spots reported Baseline: 0	Fargo radio station	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Social Determinants of Health <i>“Social determinants of health are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes.”¹³</i>						
Identify funding opportunities and economic supports for NFI community in partnership with the Department of Commerce	Alicia Belay	March 31, 2021	Two or more funding opportunities are recorded Baseline: 0	Department of Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Identify pertinent resources available to NFI with the Health and Human Services and Human Services Behavioral Health and Suicide Programs	Alicia Belay	March 31, 2021	Distinguish at least two relevant resources Baseline: 0	Health and Human Services and Human Services Behavioral Health and Suicide Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

10. “New American (Noun) American English Definition and Synonyms: Macmillan Dictionary.” Macmillan Dictionary. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/new-american>.
 11. “Foreign-Born Definition.” Dictionary.com. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/foreign-born>.
 12. Bolter, Jessica. “Explainer: Who Is an Immigrant?” Migration Policy Institute, February 2019. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/content/explainer-who-immigrant>.
 13. “About Social Determinants of Health (SDOH).” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, August 19, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/about.html>.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Social Determinants of Health						
<i>“Social determinants of health are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes.”¹³</i>						
C E Contract with Language Link to translate publicly available NDHHS documents relevant to vaccination and transmission and publicly	Alicia Belay	April 30, 2021	Two primary vaccination documents are translated into at least five languages Baseline: 0	Language Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C E Identify residual schooling needs and concerns upon resumption of classes in January 2021	Alicia Belay	March 31, 2021	Three schooling needs identified and addressed Baseline: 0	ESHARA partners NFI Advisory Board NFI COVID Education & Quarantine Support Subtask force of the Red River Task Force North Dakota Indian Education Advisory Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

10. “New American (Noun) American English Definition and Synonyms: Macmillan Dictionary.” Macmillan Dictionary. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/new-american>.
 11. “Foreign-Born Definition.” Dictionary.com. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/foreign-born>.
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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Social Determinants of Health						
<i>“Social determinants of health are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes.”¹³</i>						
Create a targeted communications plan with outside agency managing social media platforms and content to provide NFI communities with a centralized platform to promote voices, messages, and activities that are relevant to their communities	Kiameya Philson, Alicia Belay, Sargam Ghimire	September 2021 to June 2024	Social Media plan developed; pieces of content posted Baseline: 0	NDHHS Communications, NFI Advisory Board	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. “New American (Noun) American English Definition and Synonyms: Macmillan Dictionary.” Macmillan Dictionary. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/new-american>.
 11. “Foreign-Born Definition.” Dictionary.com. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/foreign-born>.
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AFRICAN AMERICANS

“African Americans are Black [Americans] who are descended from families that originally came from Africa.”¹⁴

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Partner with Forefront North Dakota Leaders and Organizations						
Identify active grassroots leaders and organizations within the North Dakotan African American community	Beverly Anaele	January 15, 2021	Comprehensive list Baseline: N/A		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
*Meet with African American leaders and community organizations to discuss COVID-19 needs and concerns	Beverly Anaele	February 1, 2021	Minimum of three meetings Baseline: 0		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Implement Racial Bias Training in Health Care Facilities						
C Create and deliver a vaccine hesitancy webinar, or interview series, and survey specifically for communities of color	Beverly Anaele, Cathony Reid, Kiamya Philson; Sargam Ghimire; Morgan Pizur-Kranc	December 31, 2022	Deliver a webinar to North Dakotans working specifically with communities of color Baseline: 0	President of the North Dakota American Academy of Pediatrics, Dr. Kathy Anderson Founder, Bluknowledge LLC, Dr. Erika Tate Health Equity Director, Krissie Guerard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

14. "African-American Definition and Meaning: Collins English Dictionary." Collins English Dictionary. HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/african-american>.

*These groups and individuals include but are not limited to: The Black Student Association (BSA) at North Dakota State University (NDSU), Black Collegiate Women at NDSU, community leaders such as the leader of the Skill Cutz Barbershop in Fargo, ND, Boutique and Beauty, Senate constituent, Laetitia Hellerud, Head of City (Fargo) Planning, Nicole Crutchfield and assistant Catlyn Christie, the Southeastern North Dakota Community Action Agency, and various community leaders.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Complete d
COVID-19 Vaccine Education						
Widely disseminate COVID-19 vaccination events with partners	Beverly Anaele, Cathony Reid	February 20, 2021	Minimum of one shared virtual event Baseline: 0		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

14. "African-American Definition and Meaning: Collins English Dictionary." Collins English Dictionary. HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/african-american>.

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVES

“American Indian or Alaska Native’ refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South American (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.”¹⁵

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Partner with Leading North Dakota Organizations						
E The Health Equity Unit will meet with Tribal Councils, Tribal Health Directors and Indian Health Service to discuss COVID-19 needs including vaccinations, testing, supplies and health care	Jorden Laducer, Krissie Guerard	April 3, 2021	Minimum of one meeting Baseline: 0	Tribal Councils Tribal Health Directors Indian Health Service Indian Affairs Commission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C E The COVID Tribal Partnership will meet monthly and/or as needed to increase vaccination rates among American Indian populations	Jorden Laducer, Krissie Guerard	February 2021 to December 2022	20 meetings Baseline: 0	Tribal Councils Tribal Health Directors Indian Health Service Indian Affairs Commission NDSU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Norris, Tina, Paula Vines, and Elizabeth Hoefel. "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010." United States Census Bureau, January 2012.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Partner with Leading North Dakota Organizations						
C E W The Health Equity Unit will identify Community Members and/or Community Leadership on each of the five American Indian AI reservations and two Urban Indian Organizations to assist with community engagement materials to address vaccine hesitancy within AI communities.	Jorden Laducer, Krissie Guerard, Kiamya Philson, Katarina Domitrovich, Jamie Thongphet, Donald "Hunter" Parisien, Sonya Abe, Cheyenne Smith	April 1, 2022	Community engagement materials: PSA, Educational Outreach/Material, Content Training Baseline: 0	NDHHS Communication Team, Tribal Health Educators, Indian Health Services, Tribal Health Directors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C E The Health Equity Unit will meet with identified tribal stakeholders to discuss COVID needs including vaccinations, testing, supplies and health care	Jorden Laducer, Krissie Guerard	April 2021	Needs are documented for the five tribal reservations and two ND urban areas with the most American Indians Baseline: N/A		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

15. Norris, Tina, Paula Vines, and Elizabeth Hoeffel. "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010." United States Census Bureau, January 2012.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who’s Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Partner with Leading North Dakota Organizations						
C E <p>The Health Equity Unit will contract with tribal organizations to increase rates, address hesitancy, develop and coordinate educational outreach</p>	Jordan Laducer, Krissie Guerard, Kiamya Philson, Jamie Thongphet, Donald "Hunter" Parisien, Sonya Abe, Cheyenne Smith, Katarina Domitrovich	April 2021 to June 2024	Outreach is conducted at all five reservations and will identify two contact person(s) on Tribal Council per American Indian Reservation (10 contacts total) Baseline: N/A	Barbershops	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Beauty salons Faith-based outreach Girls and boys clubs Local restaurants School Response Team Tribal Schools		

15. Norris, Tina, Paula Vines, and Elizabeth Hoeffel. "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010." United States Census Bureau, January 2012.

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	and/or Urban Indian Organizations to increase immunization coverage rates and address vaccine hesitance. Will contract with community partners serving tribal areas.			other North Dakotans At least six virtual vaccine panel discussions were held 8 community grants Baseline: TBD using NDIIS	Indian Health Service Community Organizations Indian Affairs Commission		
H	The Health Equity Unit will support coordination of American Indian Public Health Resource Center in collaborating with key partners, creating Tribe specific strategic plan, developing a social entrepreneurship opportunity, leadership training, and other support	Katarina Domitrovich	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Surveys, focus groups Strategic plans, needs assessments and literature reviews	North Dakota State University Tribal Nations American Indian Public Health Resource Center	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Norris, Tina, Paula Vines, and Elizabeth Hoeffel. "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010." United States Census Bureau, January 2012.

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Partner with Leading North Dakota Organizations						
C E The Health Equity Unit will contract with one organization to collaborate with tribal organizations to develop culturally appropriate materials for the American Indian population	Jorden Laducer, Krissie Guerard	June 2022 to June 2024	2 or more culturally appropriate materials are developed Baseline: 0	North Dakota State University NDHHS Communications Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Health Care						
E *NDHHS's Special Populations Coordinator and/or Tribal Health Liaisons will provide in-person and/or distant education and outreach services.	Jorden Laducer, Kiamya Philson, Jamie Thongphet, Donald "Hunter" Parisien, Sonya Abe, Cheyenne Smith	July 2021 to May 2024	Training, Pop-Up Clinics, Community Events Baseline: N/A	Tribal Health Directors Indian Health Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Health Care						
E The NDHHS will address medical resource needs and concerns (e.g., gloves, testing supplies, etc.) with the tribal entities	Sonya Abe, Jamie Thongphet, Cheyenne Smith, Donald "Hunter" Parisien	May 31, 2023	One resource needs list for each tribal entity with every need addressed within Divisions of the Health Department Baseline: N/A	Tribal Councils Tribal Health Directors Indian Health Service Medical Director of Special Health Services, Dr. Connell, for treatment needs Training and Exercise Officer, ND Department of Emergency Services, Brenda Vossler, for testing needs NDHHS Immunization Program Manager, Molly Howell, for vaccination needs NDHHS Chief Communications Officer, Marie Moe, for communication initiatives NDHHS State Trauma System Coordinator, Nicole Brunelle Emergency Preparedness and Response Section of the NDHHS Emergency Preparedness and Response nurse for medical supply requests, Dawn Lehrmann EPR PA-C for COVID testing supplies for schools, Theresa Fewless	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Health Care						
E NDHHS's Special Populations Coordinator will provide cultural competency training for health care providers	Jorden Laducer	May 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Hold at least two cultural competency training sessions Baseline: 0		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E W Four Tribal Health Liaisons were hired	Krissie Guerard and Jorden Laducer	August 1, 2021	One contract in each tribe was executed (four total) Baseline: 0		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C E The Health Equity Unit will increase vaccine confidence through education, outreach with tribal partnerships, Tribal Health Programs, and Tribal Health Boards to address COVID vaccination awareness and uptake	Jorden Laducer, Kiamya Philson, Jamie Thongphet, Donald "Hunter" Parisien, Sonya Abe, Cheyenne Smith	April 2021 to June 2024	Two trainings are held in each tribal area Baseline: N/A	Tribal Health Directors Indian Health Services Tribal Health Boards Immunization Coordinator NDHHS Communications Office	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVES

“American Indian or Alaska Native’ refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South American (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.”¹⁵

Action Steps/ Activities	Who’s Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Health Care						
C E The Health Equity Unit will partner with Tribal Community members and establish vaccine advocates to assist in shaping community perspectives regarding vaccine information.	Jorden Laducer, Kiamya Philson, Jamie Thongphet, Donald "Hunter" Parisien, Sonya Abe, Cheyenne Smith, Katarina Domitrovich	October 2021 to June 2024	Outreach is conducted at all five reservations and will identify two contact person(s) (10 contacts total) Baseline: N/A	Tribal Health Educators, Indian Health Services, Tribal Health Directors, Tribal Community members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Norris, Tina, Paula Vines, and Elizabeth Hoefel. "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010." United States Census Bureau, January 2012.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Health Care						
The Health Equity Unit will partner with NDHHS School Response Team to provide equitable communication services for AI schools related COVID-19 needs and/or services.	Jorden Laducer, Kiamya, Jamie Thongphet, Donald "Hunter" Parisien, Sonya Abe, Cheyenne Smith	October 2021 to May 2024	Provide culturally appropriate material and/ or communication, Training	Tribal Health Directors Indian Health Services Medical Director of Special Health Services ND Department of Emergency Services, Brenda Vossler, for testing needs Immunization Program Manager, Molly Howell, for vaccination needs Chief Communications Officer ND State Trauma System Coordinator, Nicole Brunelle NDHHS School Response Team Emergency Preparedness Response Section of the NDHHS Indian Affairs DPI Tribal Schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Norris, Tina, Paula Vines, and Elizabeth Hoeffel. "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010." United States Census Bureau, January 2012.

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“American Indian or Alaska Native’ refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South American (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.”¹⁵

Action Steps/ Activities	Who’s Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Health Care						
The Health Equity Unit will address COVID-19 mental health needs of American Indian children by reviewing if it is appropriate to distribute the children’s book, <i>Our Smallest Warriors</i> , to North Dakotan tribes and hosting one virtual reading event	Jorden Laducer, Cheyenne Smith, Sonya Abe, Donald “Hunter” Parisien, Jamie Thongphet	October 2021 to May 31, 2023	At least 10 books ordered and distributed to each tribe. One virtual reading event hosted Baseline: N/A	Tribal Councils Tribal Health Directors Indian Health Service Center for American Indian Health – Johns Hopkins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Health Equity Unit will identify AI Youth Committees on each of the five American Indian reservations and/or within Urban AI Committees to provide preventative health education and outreach services.	Jorden Laducer, Kiamya, Krissie Guerard, Jamie Thongphet, Donald “Hunter” Parisien, Sonya Abe, Cheyenne Smith	November 2021- May 2024	Community engagement materials: PSA, Educational Outreach/Material, Content Training, Social Media material Baseline: 0	Tribal Health Directors, Indian Health Services Urban Community Centers Medical Director of Special Health Services ND Department of Emergency Services, Brenda Vossler Immunization Program Manager, Molly Howell Chief Communications Officer, Marie Moe Tribal and Urban Schools (Private and Public) DPI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Norris, Tina, Paula Vines, and Elizabeth Hoeffel. “The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010.” United States Census Bureau, January 2012.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

“The American with Disabilities Act defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. This includes people who have a record of such impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability.”¹⁶

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Partner with Leading North Dakota Organizations to identify concerns and appropriate interventions						
Identify population needs and concerns with the Executive Director of the North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities	Alicia Belay and Beverly Anaele	January 31, 2021	Five concerns of individuals with disabilities are recorded Baseline: 0	Executive Director of the North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Julianne Horntved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Identify population needs and concerns with the Executive Director of the Protection and Advocacy Project	Beverly Anaele	January 31, 2021	Five concerns of individuals with disabilities are recorded Baseline: 0	Executive Director of the Protection and Advocacy Project, Teresa Larsen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Solicit feedback on the Health Equity COVID-19 Strategic Plan from the North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium	Alicia Belay and Beverly Anaele	February 1, 2021	Plan shared and at least two comments received Baseline: 0	Executive Director of the North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Julianne Horntved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

16. "The Americans With Disabilities Act, Addiction and Recovery for State and Local Governments." ADA National Network. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://adata.org/factsheet/ada-addiction-and-recovery-and-government>.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Partner with Leading North Dakota Organizations to identify concerns and appropriate interventions						
Identify and discuss community needs and concerns with Family Support Organizations	Beverly Anaele	March 31, 2021	Two meetings with Family Support Organizations Baseline: 0	Family Voices of ND Designer Genes of ND ND Federation of Families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Identify and discuss known community needs and concerns with the Health and Human Services's Special Health Services Division Director	Alicia Belay and Beverly Anaele	February 1, 2021	5 recorded concerns of individuals with disabilities Baseline: 0	Special Health Services Division Director, Kimberly Hruby	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Health Care						
Select appropriate state-wide points of intervention to educate medical organizations and personnel regarding COVID-19 standards of care	Beverly Anaele	April 30, 2021	One state-wide educational method has been identified Baseline: 0	NDHHS Director of Systems and Performance, Kelly Nagel President of the North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics North Dakota Hospital Association	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Be Legendary.

				North Dakota Medical Association		
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16. "The Americans With Disabilities Act, Addiction and Recovery for State and Local Governments." ADA National Network. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://adata.org/factsheet/ada-addiction-and-recovery-and-government>.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Health Care						
Widely and publicly disseminate COVID-19 educational materials through appropriate state-wide points of intervention to reach medical organizations and personnel regarding COVID-19 standards of care	Beverly Anaele	June 1, 2021	One educational effort was developed and disseminated to health personnel or medical organizations Baseline: 0	NDHHS Director of Systems and Performance, Kelly Nagel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

16. "The Americans With Disabilities Act, Addiction and Recovery for State and Local Governments." ADA National Network. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://adata.org/factsheet/ada-addiction-and-recovery-and-government>.

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Communications and Education						
c Establish a communication chain for general disability needs that includes a consistent Health Equity team member meeting with the North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium, as needed	Beverly Anaele, Jordan Laducer	February 2021 onward	Communication plan approved by NDHHS leadership Goal: meetings were attended by the Health Equity Unit, as needed Baseline: 0	North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distribute and disseminate educational materials on COVID-19 vaccine priority groups	Beverly Anaele	April 15, 2021	Two or more plain language, accessible infographics delivered with the option for alternative formats Baseline: 0	North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disseminate Disabilities Advocacy Consortium COVID-19 standards of care statement to State Health Officer	Beverly Anaele	June 1, 2021	Statement brought to State Health Officer Baseline: 0	North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Communications and Education						
C Distribute and disseminate print materials answering vaccine FAQs and the benefits of getting vaccinated to North Dakota Family Support Organizations that reach persons with disabilities	Beverly Anaele, Kiamya Philson	April 2021 to June 2024	A minimum of two forms of print materials delivered to 10 partner organizations Individual quantities will depend on the number of clients each organization serves Baseline: 0	North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium North Dakota Family Support Organizations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborate with the Joint Information Center to reintroduce the North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium anti-discrimination statement as a white paper	Beverly Anaele	December 2022	Statement brought to Joint Information Center for reconsideration Baseline: N/A	Joint Information Center	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. "The Americans With Disabilities Act, Addiction and Recovery for State and Local Governments." ADA National Network. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://adata.org/factsheet/ada-addiction-and-recovery-and-government>.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Communications and Education						
Analyze transportation access areas, and respond to gaps with at home testing kits and regularly planned pop-up testing and vaccination centers--contract with DOT or transportation service to assist with understanding accessibility beyond self-reporting of LPHC	Kiameya Philson, Beverly Anaele, Raleigh Chase	August 2021 to August 2022	Analyze survey data from LPHC and have 3 lowest service areas have an increase in coverage/usage of transportation services	North Dakota Department of Transportation NDHHS Communications Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contract with NDCPD to work with food banks in order to organize a "Friend Line" to support isolation/quarantine and prevent deteriorating mental health/lack of physical substance for those with limited	Beverly Anaele, Kiameya Philson	September 2021 to July 2023	Number of calls by targeted demographic/number attended at virtual "events"	NDCPD Behavioral Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Be Legendary.

mobility/home bound						
Technical Assistance for educational opportunities	Jorden Laducer	TBD		TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

AGING OR ELDERLY POPULATION

“The elderly population is defined as people aged 65 and over.”¹⁷

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Partner with Leading North Dakota Organizations						
E *The Health Equity Unit will contract with religious organizations to develop denominational or regional coalitions focused on the aging population. Coalitions will help the NDHHS understand barriers to vaccinations, while creating solutions to increase vaccination rates among the ageing population. Coalitions will provide education to religious congregations	Alicia Belay, Katarina Domitrovich	October 31, 2021 onward	Contracts will be established by October 31, 2021 Number of aging population engaged through coalition efforts from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022 Baseline: 0		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E The Health Equity Unit will contract with at least one religious organization to develop outreach for 65 and older, including 1:1 service such as ride programming and/ or door-to-door information campaigns	Alicia Belay	January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022	Contract is established by December 31, 2021 Number of 65 and older participants from January 1 and December 31, 2022 Baseline: 0		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. "Elderly population." Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Accessed February 26, 2021. <https://data.oecd.org/pop/elderly-population.htm>

* Religious organizations are well positioned to reach their parishioners and are trusted leaders in their communities, especially for communities of color and ageing. Religious organizations should be identified that can lead coalitions, either regionally (e.g., a Fargo-wide coalition) or denominational level (e.g., all Islamic institutions).

AGING OR ELDERLY POPULATION

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Partner with Leading North Dakota Organizations						
Discuss projects with NDCPD that would help support need in homeless and aging populations	Jorden Laducer, Beverly Anaele	TBD			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explore what support and benefits AARP may have for aging population	Beverly Anaele	TBD			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tribal Health Liaisons will discuss Tribal outreach needs and methods to the elder population within their assigned regions	Donald “Hunter” Parisien, Sonya Abe, Jamie Thongphet, Cheyenne Smith	TBD			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. “Elderly population.” Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Accessed February 26, 2021. <https://data.oecd.org/pop/elderly-population.htm>

* Religious organizations are well positioned to reach their parishioners and are trusted leaders in their communities, especially for communities of color and ageing. Religious organizations should be identified that can lead coalitions, either regionally (e.g., a Fargo-wide coalition) or denominational level (e.g., all Islamic institutions).

OTHER SPECIAL POPULATIONS:

LGBTQ2S+ POPULATIONS*, HOMELESS POPULATIONS AND RURAL POPULATIONS

"LGBTQ2S+ is an acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning and Two-Spirit."¹⁸

Homelessness is "an extreme form of poverty characterized by the instability of housing and the inadequacy of income, health care supports and social supports."¹⁹

Rural is defined as "any population, housing, or territory not in an urban area."²⁰

Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Partner with Leading North Dakota Organizations						
C **Establish a sub-committee of the BeYOU Advisory Board to discuss any concerns or needs that the LGBTQ2S+ population may have regarding COVID-19	Krissie Guerard	March 1, 2021	Sub-committee of the BeYOU Advisory Board has been formed and is active Baseline: N/A	BeYOU Advisory Board sub-committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C Meet with BeYOU Advisory Board quarterly and/or as needed, to address LGBTQ2S+ COVID health concerns	Katarina Domitrovich	February 2021 to June 2024	12 meetings Baseline: 0	BeYOU Advisory Board sub-committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
***The Health Equity Unit will partner with the NDHHS and other state agencies to discuss any COVID-19 needs that have not been met within the ND homeless population	Cathony Reid; Beverly Anaele	May 1, 2021	At least one meeting with the NDHHS and other state agencies Baseline: 0	Health and Human Services and Human Services NDHHS Red River Task Force ND Coalition of Homeless People; Tribal Health Liaisons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

18. "LGBTQ2S+: What Does It Mean?" Kids Help Phone. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/lgbtq2s-what-does-it-mean/>.

19. "What is Homelessness?" The Homeless Hub. Accessed January 7, 2021. <https://homelesshub.ca/resource/what-homelessness>

20. "How Does the U.S. Census Bureau Define 'Rural?'" The U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed 14 May 2021. <https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=49cd4bc9c8eb444ab51218c1d5001ef6#:~:text=The%20Census%20Bureau%20defines%20rural,tied%20to%20the%20urban%20definition.>

*The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Two-Spirit Community (LGBTQ2S+) Advisory Board will be known as "BeYOU Health Board" (BYHB). The BYHB will provide recommendations regarding LGBTQ2S+ health issues and topics to North Dakota Health and Human Services (NDHHS). Board members will assist the NDHHS in ensuring LGBTQ2S+ perspectives are incorporated in planning and decisions for the state and forming community partnerships.

** If the subcommittee has special needs for the LGBTQ2S+community action steps will be added to the strategic plan

*** If gaps are still existing with the COVID response in the ND homeless population action steps will be added to the strategic plan.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Partner with Leading North Dakota Organizations						
H Contract with CHAD to hold COVID-19 participatory grant funding opportunity for rural communities	Katarina Domitrovich, Alicia Belay	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	One participatory grant making session; funded community-based organizations	Various community-based organizations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H Train the current and future rural health care workforce in resiliency and health sciences engagement to meet COVID-19 and other disease needs	Katarina Domitrovich	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	Four rural-based HOSA Future Health Professionals school chapters; fifty trained HOSA students through the HappiGenius course; trained key health care providers in resiliency; and housing support for health care professional students	University of North Dakota, Center for Rural Health North Dakota Area Health Education Center	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. "LGBTQ2S+: What Does It Mean?" Kids Help Phone. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/lgbtq2s-what-does-it-mean/>.

19. "What is Homelessness?" The Homeless Hub. Accessed January 7, 2021. <https://homelesshub.ca/resource/what-homelessness>

20. "How Does the U.S. Census Bureau Define 'Rural?'" The U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed 14 May 2021. <https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=49cd4bc9c8eb444ab51218c1d5001ef6#~:text=The%20Census%20Bureau%20defines%20rural,tied%20to%20the%20urban%20definition.>

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
Testing						
H Develop new modeling systems and methods of payment for and with rural CHAs along with an advisory group to inform these changes for productive care management of COVID-19 and other illnesses	Katarina Domitrovich	June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023	A newly formed Critical Access Hospital advisory group Implemented processes for planning, education, and analyzing new model and payment systems	University of North Dakota, Center for Rural Health Critical Access Hospitals National and regional experts North Dakota Rural Health Task Force North Dakota Hospital Association	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. “LGBTQ2S+: What Does It Mean?” Kids Help Phone. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/lgbtq2s-what-does-it-mean/>.

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Fund local education and vaccination campaigns</i>						
H Develop and execute a COVID-19 social media campaign reaching LGBTQ2S+ individuals on dating apps and websites	Krissie Guerard	September 30, 2021	Number of spots ran and viewed		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
E Provide COVID-19 vaccinations and educational material to homeless shelters	Cathony Reid	July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022	COVID-19 vaccination and educational material is given to 10 North Dakota homeless shelters Baseline: 0		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Youth Advisory Board will explore COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy on TikTok by created appropriate, engaging messaging to reach a younger audience	Kiamya Philson	September 2021 onward		NDHHS Communications; YAB	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. "LGBTQ2S+: What Does It Mean?" Kids Help Phone. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/lgbtq2s-what-does-it-mean/>.

19. "What is Homelessness?" The Homeless Hub. Accessed January 7, 2021. <https://homelesshub.ca/resource/what-homelessness>

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Action Steps/ Activities	Who's Responsible	Date	Measure	Partners	In Progress	Completed
<i>Fund local education and vaccination campaigns</i>						
By December 31, 2022, the Youth Advisory Board COVID-19 Taskforce will have executed the Healthy Habits Campaign which includes discussion on overall health and specific advocacy toward: Immunizations, Mental Health, Diet/Exercise, Financial Health, and Sexual Health	Krissie Guerard, Katarina Domitrovich, Morgan Pizur-Kranc	September 2021 to May 31, 2022	Campaign put together through agency in collaboration with YAB, social media platforms used, YAB members will be face of campaign, NDHHS will receive all campaign materials for future use.	TBD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. "LGBTQ2S+: What Does It Mean?" Kids Help Phone. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/lgbtq2s-what-does-it-mean/>.

19. "What is Homelessness?" The Homeless Hub. Accessed January 7, 2021. <https://homelesshub.ca/resource/what-homelessness>

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APPENDIX A

Table 1 Addressing COVID19 in Special Populations strategic plan weekly tracking sheet template.

Goal	Objective	Due Date	Data Measure	Team Responsible	Completed	No. Served	Notes/Tracking