Northwest Arkansas COVID-19 Comprehensive Response Plan for Special Populations

Update: November 2020

Disparities: The COVID-19 racial/ethnic disparities in Northwest Arkansas (NWA) were so stark that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) came to the region to investigate in June and July 2020, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) came to investigate in early August 2020. The CDC’s July 2020 report documented that 45% of all adult cases in NWA were Latinx, and 19% were Pacific Islander (primarily Marshallese). Latinx and Pacific Islanders only account for 17% and 2.4% of the region’s population, respectively. COVID-19 deaths in NWA were also disparate across race and ethnicity. Pacific Islander deaths per 100,000 in NWA were estimated to be 372.4 — much higher than the overall death ratio of 5.10 per 100,000 in NWA and the death ratio for Caucasians of 4.03 per 100,000 in NWA. Even among racial/ethnic minorities, the Pacific Islander population in NWA stands out as having much higher odds of death from COVID-19 (25 times higher than among Latinx persons).

Response: In response to the CDC’s recommendations, the Northwest Arkansas Council’s Health Care Transformation Division (Table 1) asked the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Northwest Campus and Community Clinic to lead the collaborative development and implementation of a Northwest Arkansas COVID-19 Comprehensive Response Plan for Special Populations to ensure collaboration and multi-agency coordination of COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, enhanced case management, and health education. The plan includes:

Component 1: Multi-agency coordination to address COVID-19.

Component 2: A collaborative approach to testing in a distributed manner that leverages current resources and enhances these efforts through targeted testing that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for special populations in NWA.

Component 3: A dedicated contact tracing center in NWA with bilingual Spanish and Marshallese staff that: a) fully coordinates with Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) software, policies, procedures, and sub-contractors, and b) fully integrates with employers to support the workforce. Additionally, contact tracing support will be provided in Randolph, Independence, Yell, and Sevier Counties.

Component 4: Enhanced case management, navigation, and supported quarantine to ensure connections with services to support special populations in NWA.

Component 5: Culturally and linguistically appropriate health education and communication targeted at prevention, testing, contact tracing, and self-quarantine.

Component 6: Culturally and linguistically appropriate vaccination education, outreach, and distribution.

This plan was designed to address the recommendations of the CDC’s assessment of needs. This report is written to provide an update on progress toward those recommendations.
Impact:
Cases among Latinx and Marshallese residents were on a steady increase from March through July and were ~400% higher than the general population. Since we implemented the collaborative plan for the Latinx and Marshallese community members in late July (green line), with CARES funding in August (red line), and became fully functional in September (purple line), the weekly proportion of cases among Latinx and Marshallese community members has sharply declined and aligned more closely with the proportions of Latinx and Marshallese residents in NWA. See Figures 1 and 2. In July, 45% of all adult COVID-19 cases (cumulative proportion) in NWA were Latinx, and 19% (cumulative proportion) were Marshallese. As of December 1, the cumulative proportion was, 35.1% among Latinx and 9.6% among Marshallese, respectively. See Figures 3 and 4. It is very rare to see population impact this quickly and to maintain that impact over several months. There is still much work to be done, but our collaboration is making a difference.

Figure 1

Figure 2
As a result of this project:

- 844 index cases and 2,030 contacts who do not speak English well were served with bilingual contact tracing in November. This was almost double the contacts and cases as we served in October.

- 569 index cases and contacts were provided navigation services in November.

- Multiple non-profit organizations and churches have developed a food distribution network to provide food to quarantined families. Ozark Regional Transit delivers the food to families in quarantine each week. Food was delivered to 319 households in November. Since the project began, more than 1,300 families have been provided food to quarantine (note that funding for the food was not provided through this contract).

- UAMS adapted a CDC worksite assessment for use with Marshallese and Latinx small businesses to ensure they have safety precautions in place to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Areas of concern identified in the assessment, such as a lack of signage or employees without masks, are addressed immediately. 137 businesses have now been assessed and aided.

More than 70 different educational materials have been developed and distributed in English, Spanish, and Marshallese, with an estimated reach of more than 400,000 people. These educational materials are distributed to more than 200 community partners across the state, with monthly e-mail updates informing partners of new materials.

- The 13 organizations partnering with UAMS and Community Clinic for this project provided 13,825 prevention education and/or prevention support educational materials in November.

- Daily updates on COVID-19 are distributed in English, Marshallese, and Spanish, reaching ~20,000 residents.

1. Multi-Agency Coordination

- The NWA Latinx COVID-19 Taskforce met on November 5 and November 19. The taskforce discussed further outreach to Latinx small businesses in NWA, helped with a poster campaign on mask wearing, created a Facebook page in Spanish to better communicate with the community, and discussed upcoming outreach and testing events. Biweekly meetings continue.

- The Marshallese COVID-19 Taskforce met on November 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 to discuss new resources for those affected by COVID-19, and upcoming outreach and testing events in the area. Weekly meetings have been held since March and will continue.

- Health care partner meetings continue, and weekly meetings between partners and ADH take place to ensure interagency coordination of contact tracing and testing.

- Subcontracts have been executed with 13 nonprofits in Northwest Arkansas to ensure enhanced case management and supported quarantine. These include: Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese, Arkansas Immigrant Defense, Arkansas United Community Coalition, Community Pharmacy, Feed the 479, Hispanic Women’s Organization of Arkansas, Marshallese Educational Initiative, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank, Ozark Regional Transit, Rooted NWA, and Samaritan Community Center.
• Subcontracts have also been executed with El Centro Hispano and Arkansas Human Development Corporation to support COVID-19 contact tracing and quarantine efforts in Independence, Randolph, Sevier, and Yell Counties.
• UAMS has fully executed agreements with Community Clinic to support health care navigation and COVID-19 testing in NWA.
• UAMS has fully executed agreements with Mercy Hospital and Washington Regional Medical Center to support additional COVID-19 testing in NWA.

2. Staffing and Training (all efforts)
• UAMS and Community Clinic have hired 60 staff, including bilingual contact tracers, bilingual navigators, and other staff to support case management in Northwest Arkansas.
• El Centro Hispano and Arkansas Human Development Corporation have hired 14 bilingual navigators to support case management and quarantine efforts in Independence, Randolph, Sevier, and Yell Counties.
• Training has been completed and continuing education is ongoing.

3. Testing
• 29,091 COVID-19 tests were conducted by partners in the month of November.
• Six testing teams are conducting serial testing of close contacts generated through our contact tracing program.
• Serial testing was conducted with 378 close contacts in November, all living with a positive patient.
  o Washington Regional Medical Center nurse navigators called patients with results, provided risk assessments and follow-up calls to patients.
• An additional testing site was opened in mid-November at the UAMS Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education in Springdale.
  o 558 COVID tests were provided November 5-30 at this location.
  o 128 flu shots were provided to patients during testing.
• Antigen testing units for special populations have been placed in Northwest Arkansas.

4. Contact Tracing
• 844 index cases of Latinx and Marshallese individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 during the month of November were assigned to the contract tracing center.
  o Attempts were made to reach all index cases.
  o Within 24 hours of receipt, contacts/attempted contacts were made with 81.5% of all index cases.
  o 89.8% of all index cases were successfully contacted.
• These index cases generated 2,030 contacts.
  o 86.7% of contacts were contacted/attempted contact within 24 hours.

5. Enhanced Case Management, Navigation, Supported Quarantine
Bilingual navigators work with each contact/index case to understand if their setting is appropriate to safely quarantine. All cases and contacts are provided education on how to safely quarantine and/or isolate. The navigators complete a short assessment to determine if the individual/family has enough food, water, and other supplies to safely quarantine for 10-14 days. Individuals who identify as having one or more needs receive navigation services during their
quarantine. If an index/contact case does not want the navigation assessment, navigators follow-up within seven days via phone/text to check-in with the individual/family and ensure that the individual/family can continue to safely quarantine. The most common identified need for the Latinx and Marshallese communities is utility assistance and food assistance. Navigators work with community organizations so that the community organizations can meet the needs of the individual/family and allow for safe and successful quarantine and/or isolation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Risk</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Minimum Frequency of Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1: High Need</td>
<td>4 or more needs are identified during intake assessment</td>
<td>Navigator makes contact with client by phone within 24 hours and continues assisting for up to 30 days or until needs are met. If client is not reached by phone, navigator will work with the ADH to attempt to reach the client at their home address.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tier 2: Medium Need</td>
<td>2-3 needs are identified during intake assessment</td>
<td>Navigator contacts the client by phone within 24 hours and continues assisting for up to 14 days or until needs are met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3: Low Need</td>
<td>0-1 needs identified during intake assessment</td>
<td>Navigator contacts the client by text or phone once or twice within first week of quarantine and provides information on support services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 569 new index cases and/or contacts were provided navigation services in November.
- Multiple non-profit organizations and churches have developed a food distribution network to provide food to quarantined families. Ozark Regional Transit delivers the food to families in quarantine each week. Food was delivered to 319 households (1,661 individuals) in November. Since the project began, more than 1,300 families have been provided food to quarantine (note that funding for the food was not provided through this contract).

The following are a few examples of success stories from our navigation team:
- A bilingual navigator was able to help a Latinx resident of Northwest Arkansas who lost his job shortly before his diagnosis with COVID-19 access unemployment benefits that enabled him to avoid falling behind on his rent and utilities.
- A bilingual navigator in Northwest Arkansas worked with local community partners to obtain enough food for multiple families to safely quarantine/isolate, offering this testimonial, “Today I picked up food/meals from the Samaritan Community Center in Rogers for three families and delivered them to their homes. The look of disbelief and appreciation was priceless. Each family would thank me each time I would bring different items to their door and at the end they would say, ‘Thank you very much, God bless you!’”
- A bilingual navigator worked with a Latinx man in Washington County who initially indicated that he did not require assistance to safely quarantine. When the navigator followed up with the man, he admitted that being out of work to quarantine was affecting his family more than anticipated. The navigator was able to connect the family with financial assistance to help with bills until the man could return to work.
• Bilingual navigators in Sevier County were able to assist Latinx residents with rent, mortgage, and utility assistance through participating local and state agencies, helping families avoid eviction or disconnection of utilities during quarantine.

• A bilingual navigator in Independence County worked with a family of six where the husband and wife had tested positive for COVID-19 and the father had recently lost his job. The navigator was able to educate the family on how to safely isolate to protect the healthy members of the family. The navigator also helped the family access food and utility assistance to prevent disconnection of their electricity during quarantine.

• A bilingual navigator in Randolph County helped a recent widow, whose son tested positive for COVID-19, access financial assistance to help pay her rent while she had to stay at home with her child. The navigator was also able to provide guidance to the mother on how she could care for her son while reducing her risk of contracting the virus.

• A bilingual navigator worked with a Latinx church in Independence County where multiple members of the congregation had tested positive for COVID-19. The navigator provided 45 PPE kits and educational materials, and worked with the church leadership to provide a safer way for members to worship.

6. Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Health Education and Communication

a. Health Education Materials

Numerous health educational materials have been created and are being distributed statewide to more than 200 community-based organizations and employers. **New items are bolded.** Materials can be found at [https://www.nwacouncil.org/covidresources](https://www.nwacouncil.org/covidresources). New materials are e-mailed to partners monthly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Public Health Education and Communications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Television Advertising</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• COVID-19 testing Public Service Announcement (PSA) in Spanish on Univision.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• General safe practices PSA in Spanish on Univision/Telemundo, July-August.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New mask, safe practices PSA in Spanish on Univision/Telemundo, September.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Physician experts for 21 English news segments on COVID-19 education through KNWA/Fox24, including 1 segment on COVID-19 and influenza.

### Radio Advertising
- 17 recorded broadcasts of *Kepopo ilo Pojam*, featuring Dr. Sheldon Riklon, airing on KMRW; **2 new episodes in November**.
- Spanish and Marshallese PSAs airing hundreds of times on La Zeta KSEC and KMRW promoting handwashing and testing.
- 1 Marshallese radio PSA airing in August on safe practices.
- 1 Marshallese radio PSA airing in September on mask use and COVID prevention.
- 1 Spanish radio PSA airing in August on safe practices.
- 1 Spanish radio PSA airing in September on mask use and COVID prevention.
- **1 new radio advertisement on COVID support and resources**
- 58 spots/news segments broadcast on Spanish/Marshallese radio by community partners.

### Print Advertising
- Weekly Marshallese ads in *Chikin Melele* newspaper promoting testing, mask etiquette, and hand hygiene.
- Weekly Spanish ads in *La Prensa Libre* newspaper promoting testing, mask etiquette, hand hygiene, and safe carpooling. Beginning in October, an additional weekly ad was included on behalf of Latinx collaborative partners on this project. **4 new ads ran in November.**
- Two-page spread in *Arkansas Immigrants’ Guide*, a Spanish-language publication on COVID prevention, testing, and isolation/quarantine. Guide will be distributed statewide, including in all Arkansas Tyson plants.
- One full-page testimonial ad in English/Spanish in *Arkansas Flavor* on COVID prevention.

### Billboard Advertising
- 4 billboards in NWA promoting COVID-19 testing in Spanish, through September. Added 3 new billboards in October.
- 6 billboards in NWA with rotating safe practices messaging in English, Spanish, and Marshallese, with 502,856 weekly impressions, July–August.
- 6 billboards in NWA with rotating safe practices messaging in English, Spanish, and Marshallese, with 474,669 weekly impressions, September – November.

### Digital Advertising
- Spanish-language video ads targeted to NWA.
  - 12,466 Reached
  - 9,100+ Views
  - 128 Likes
  - 563 Clicks
  - 72 Shares

### Video Production
- 6 video PSAs produced in English, Spanish, and Marshallese (18 total), promoting social distancing, handwashing, proper use of PPE/mask usage, testing, and quarantine and isolation.
- Marshallese translation for ADH video.
- 2 testimonial videos produced in English, Spanish, and Marshallese: one features a pastor who recovered from COVID, and the other features a Marshallese-American woman recovering from COVID whose father died from the virus.
- **1 new video was produced and distributed in English and Spanish explaining community navigation.**
- **81 videos created or shared by community partners through social media or other uses in November.**
- **1 new video produced and shared describing free COVID testing, flu shots, and bilingual navigation services at the UAMS Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education**

**Social Media**
- **1,500+** social media messages shared related to COVID-19 and COVID-related community resources in English, Spanish, and Marshallese.
  - **500+** social media messages created or shared in November by coalition partners.
  - **17 Facebook Live episodes of Kepopo ilo Pojam,** featuring Dr. Sheldon Riklon. Average reach: 10,200.
  - **2 new videos produced in November.**
  - **4 Facebook Live videos from community partners in Marshallese in November.**
  - Launched Safe & Strong COVID-19 prevention video targeted ads on September 11 on Facebook and Instagram.

**Printed Materials**
- Bilingual handouts on COVID-19 and community resources delivered in food boxes to food-insecure quarantined families.
- Other handouts, signage, toolkits, and educational materials created in English, Spanish, and Marshallese and delivered online and in person through community partners.
- Provided translation for two ADH COVID-19 education documents.
- Distributed 500+ educational flyers with Springdale school summer lunch programming on CDC guidelines for disease prevention.
- Distributed educational information at multiple drive-thru testing events in English, Spanish, and Marshallese.
- Included COVID-19 educational materials in meal boxes delivered to quarantined patients in English, Spanish, and Marshallese.
- Handed out 250 bottles of hand sanitizer to local businesses, non-profits, and law enforcement agencies with COVID-19/disease prevention flyers attached.
- Provided 1,400 handouts on COVID-19 prevention and quarantine to Federally Qualified Health Center patients, mid-August – mid-September.
- Printed 10,000 handouts for Samaritan Community Center to begin delivering in Snack Packs in September.
- Distributed 1,200 posters (400 each in English, Spanish, Marshallese) encouraging mask wearing to schools in Benton, Washington, Madison, and Carroll counties.
- Provided 550 handouts in English, Spanish, and Marshallese to the Madison County Health Coalition for dissemination to local health care providers.
- Distributed handouts for school safety/COVID-19 precautions in English and Spanish to the Teen Summits hosted by Madison County Health Coalition and Carroll County Health Coalition.
- Printed 10,500 handouts to be distributed by testing sites on proper guidance when waiting on test results, and detailed explanations of quarantine and isolation for testing team use.
- Printed more than 1,000 multi-lingual materials that were distributed at different events and partners in Northwest Arkansas.
- **38,000 handouts printed by UAMS in November.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>13,000+ COVID-related educational handouts from trusted health sources distributed by community partners in November.</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Produced 5 audio PSAs in English, Spanish, and Marshallese (15 total) for broadcast in poultry plants across Arkansas, per CDC recommendations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Created 40+ educational infographics, each in English, Spanish, and Marshallese (120+ total) on COVID-19.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Developed worksite and faith-based toolkits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provided information on employer resources, testing, and COVID-19 prevention to 100+ Hispanic-owned businesses since April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 69 appearances in print, radio, television, or other news stories by community partners in November.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Kejparok baamle eo am ilo Holiday in

Holiday kein ekka an ien ŋañ an baamle ko kafa ippen doon im koomnane mòñà ko relap, bôtaab ilo in jej aikuj koomnan ijo konoad ŋan bôpra ajeedat in COVID-19. Kafa lîben dron online ak ippen ro uwaan baamle eo am nywe inamaj eñaj bar kadrikjok kauwòtata ikijen an ajeedat. Elarje kwöy tel ak ped ilo len ippen droon ko, jouj im joore wàwein kein:

Aikuj skônak mejee, kotôljok orôk jun ro jet, im kwàl peiûm im leljok mejee ŋan ro uwaan baamle eo am ak ro môstam im ejeljok aër.

Koomnan joañ oran armej re ilo len koba ko.

Koomnan ien koba ko naborjok ilo juûn jikin eo elap im amyman ŋan menono.

Koomnan ien koba ko ljoko repaak. Jab travel ak etal ŋan ljoko rettoljak ñe koomran.

Jab tel ak bôk kuñaam ilo jabadwot len kamônônô ko ippen armej, ełàne kwe ak jabadwot jen mweo imôm:

- Èmûj an bôk nañimnej in COVID-19 im ejañin rolok ŋan an ped turin armej.
- Emaroñi kar ped turin juûn eo èwôr nañimnej in COVID-19 ippen ilo raan ko 14 rej moojtôk.
- Èped ilo kauwòtata ak maroñi njukkun nañimnej ñe abbôk COVID-19.

Bôk wà in flu eo anl! Ien koba ko ermaroñi bar kôlajok an ajeedat kuj in nañimnej kapopo ko jet. Ilo am bôk wà in flu eo ej môsttan wàwein ko ŋan jiperi kejparok ejmôur eo am im an baamle eo am im ermaroñi/jiperi tókti im aupiptôl (hospital) ko jen aer obrak ilo ien in.
ESTAMOS AQUI PARA SIVIRLE.
Si necesita asistencia mientras estás en cuarentena o aislamiento, como con lo siguiente:

ASISTENCIA CON PAGOS DE RENTA

ASISTENCIA CON PAGOS A LOS SERVICIOS PÚBLICOS

ENTREGA DE MEDICAMENTOS

CARTAS A LOS EMPLEADORES SOBRE AUSENCIAS POR CAUSAS RELACIONADAS AL COVID-19.

Envíe un email a WeCare@uams.edu y un Navegador de Salud Comunitaria responderá dentro de 24 horas para asistirle con referidos.
Arkansas Immigrant Defense
November 23 at 2:16 PM:

Consejos de UAMS Northwest Community Health and Research y Iglesia La Luz Del Mundo sobre asistir a la iglesia y en general, prácticas sugeridas para mantenerse a usted, su familia, y la comunidad sano y seguro.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfKbxSFYNHk...

Tips from UAMS Northwest Community Health and Research and Iglesia La Luz Del Mundo on attending church and generally, suggested practices to keep you, your family, and the community healthy and safe.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfKbxSFYNHk...

Sus hijos también necesitan mascaras!
Mientras espera los resultados de su prueba...

1. Dígale a su trabajo o escuela
   Tendrá que decirle a su trabajo o escuela que no puede ir al trabajo o a la escuela hasta que tenga los resultados de su examen.

2. Quédese en casa
   Quédese en casa y no vaya al supermercado, el trabajo, la iglesia o cualquier otra área pública. Si tiene que salir de casa, use una máscara que le cubra la boca y la nariz. Use una máscara alrededor de otras personas en su casa y lávese las manos con frecuencia. Si su prueba sale positiva, tendrá que mantenerse alejado de todos los miembros del hogar hasta que esté bien.

3. Pida ayuda
   Si necesita ayuda, como alimentos, suministros para cuidarse, ayuda para pagar sus facturas o una carta al empleador, envíenos un correo electrónico a WeCare@uams.edu. Un navegador del departamento de salud de la Universidad de Arkansas de Servicios Médicos le llamara no más tardar al próximo día.

4. Responda a la llamada
   Si da positivo, un funcionario de salud le llamara y le preguntara sobre los lugares en los que ha estado y con los que ha pasado tiempo para que puedan hablar con esas personas y hacerles saber que pueden haber estado expuestos. No compartirán su nombre ni ninguna otra información sobre usted.

5. Obtenga ayuda médica
   Si usted comienza a sentirse muy enfermo o tiene problemas para respirar, es posible que necesite ver a un médico o ir a la sala de emergencias inmediatamente. Llame con anticipación, use una máscara y hágale saber al personal que ha sido examinado para COVID-19.
b. Community Outreach

- Northwest Arkansas Council Health Care Transformation Partners provided PPE for daily living and quarantine to Marshallese and Latinx community members. 761 PPE kits with thermometers and health information in English, Spanish, and Marshallese were distributed to navigation clients in November.
- UAMS adapted a CDC worksite assessment for use with Marshallese and Latinx small businesses to ensure they have safety precautions in place to minimize the spread of COVID-19. UAMS staff began conducting assessments in the community on August 17. Areas of concern identified in the assessment, including a lack of signage, or employees without masks are addressed immediately. 137 businesses have now been assessed and aided, including:
  - 70 Latinx-owned businesses
  - 5 Marshallese-owned businesses
  - 20 businesses frequented by the target populations (i.e., laundry facilities, restaurants, ethnic food stores)
  - 22 funeral homes used by Marshallese and Latinx community members
  - 1 Marshallese church (others are meeting remotely).
- The 13 organizations partnering with UAMS and Community Clinic for this project provided 13,825 prevention education and/or prevention support educational materials in November.
- Daily updates on COVID-19 are distributed in English, Marshallese, and Spanish, reaching ~20,000 residents.