



Spilyay Tymo

Coyote News, est. 1976

December 30, 2020 - Vol. 45, No. 27

December - Nch'i-An - Winter - Yiyam

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Welcome start to a New Year

The first Covid-19 vaccines arrived last week at the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Clinic. Staff began administering the vaccines right away; and as of earlier this week, the clinic workers had given these first vaccines to roughly 200 individuals.

The follow-up shot is administered 28 days following the first one. The clinic expects to receive more shots this week, and into coming months, continuing the vaccinations as the shots become available.

Clearly, this marks a key turning point in the fight against the pandemic. Following the Centers for Disease Control and IHS guidelines, the clinic is administering the shots as follows:

- Phase 1a: Health care personnel, and long term care facility residents.

- Phase 1b: Age 75 and older, and frontline essential workers.

- Phase 1c: Essential workers not recommended in Phase 1b; age 65-74, and persons aged 16-64 with high-risk medical conditions

Phase 2: Available for those 16-64 years old not included in Phase 1 who are recommended for vaccination. The clinic wishes to share the following information with the community (*also see page 7 of this publication*):

First: Will the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine give you Covid-19?

Answer: No. The Moderna vaccine does not contain the virus and cannot give a person Covid-19.



Side effects that have been reported with the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine include:

Injection site reactions: Pain, tenderness and swelling of the lymph nodes in the same arm of the injection, swelling and redness.

General side effects: Fatigue, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills, nausea and vomiting and fever.

There is a remote chance that the vaccine could cause a severe allergic reaction. A severe allergic reaction would usually occur within a few minutes to one hour after getting a dose of the vaccine.

For this reason, your vaccination provider may ask you to stay at the place where you received your vaccine for monitoring after the vaccination.

It is your choice to receive or not receive the vaccine.

Should you decide not to receive it, this will not change your standard medical care.

Question: Are other choices available for preventing Covid-19



Mitchell Lira photos/KWSO

Last week preparing (top left) for the very first Covid-19 vaccine on the reservation are clinic staff Tim Wainanwit (seated) and Marc Mason; and the first vaccination (above right); and (directly above) Tim and Marc following the history-making shot of hope.

besides the vaccine?

Answer: Currently, there is no FDA-approved alternative vaccine available for prevention of Covid-19: The available vaccinations are

available under Emergency Use Authorization.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, discuss your options with your healthcare provider.

Community update

As of earlier this week, the Warm Springs Healthness Center had conducted 6,561 tests for the Covid-19 virus. Of these, 5,944 have come back negative.

Since the clinic began testing in March, there have been a total of 590 positives.

Since the pandemic began, among the reservation population 64 individuals have been hospitalized with Covid-19. Fifty-nine have been discharged.

There have been 14 deaths among the reservation population. In addition to the tests from the clinic, there have been 74 positive tests among the membership from other facility testing. This brings the total to 664 among the Confederated Tribes membership.

There were a total of 23 new positives last week. As of earlier in the week, there were 32 people on the reservation with active Covid-19, receiving daily monitoring by tribal and IHS staff.

In addition, 67 people were identified as in close contact, and were also receiving the daily monitoring.

Ahern recounts work with Senator in D.C.

For a year now Robert 'Bobby' Ahern, 25, has been a Legislative Assistant to Oregon's U.S. Senator Ron Wyden.

His work with Sen. Wyden continues Bobby's federal legislative work that began in 2016, when he was the recipient of the Mark O. Hatfield Fellowship.

At that time he worked in the office of U.S. Congressman Earl Blumenauer, of Oregon's Third Congressional District.

"That was a great opportunity—an introduction and experience working in a Congressional office,"

In 2017, after his time as the Hatfield Fellow, Bobby then worked for the National Indian Health Board. The NIHB, based on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., represents tribal governments on health care matters at the national level.

With the NIHB Bobby worked on Congressional relations, often related to funding matters for tribal health programs and services. This was an opportunity to further get to

know Congressional offices and tribal governments, including the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, of which Bobby is a member.

Then about this time last year he began his job as Legislative Assistant to Sen. Wyden. The legislative aides each have areas of particular focus. With Sen. Wyden, Bobby focuses on all things related to energy, natural resources and water, among other tribal matters. Some notable examples:

In late 2019 Senators Wyden and Jeff Merkley introduced The Western Tribal Water Infrastructure Act. "I've been able to work a lot on that bill," Bobby says.

The law would provide additional resources for Western tribes to address ageing drinking water infrastructure, often long-overdue for improvement and expansion. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs were among the direct inspirations for this legislation: The bill originated around the time of the tribes' first long-term water crisis. At its introduction in the U.S. Senate, Warm Springs Tribal Council Chairman Raymond



Robert Ahern

Tsumpti commented:

"This legislation would throw a lifeline to tribes like Warm Springs that are in dire need of water infrastructure improvements to serve their tribal membership."

Another pending matter with the Sen. Wyden's office is proposed legislation to help address the growing wildfire threat in the West, including on tribal lands. These laws can be expected to move forward early in 2021. There are two significant components to this legislative effort of great interest to Warm Springs, Bobby said.

One is the funding of the programs themselves, to mitigate the wildlife risk. And a second element is the creation of jobs—workforce development—to carry out these programs, he said.

Sen. Wyden is also a strong advocate of Covid-19 relief for Oregon communities; and tribal communities have been very hard hit by the pandemic: Native communities have seen 3.5 times the rate of Covid-19 infection as compared to non-Hispanic whites.

A legislative project that began some time before Bobby's time with Senator Wyden was 2020 nullification of the treaty of 1865. "Being from Oregon and a tribal member, I thought that was great," he says.

While working as a Legislative Assistant, Bobby is also a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University. He is a graduate of Pacific University, where he studied Sociology and Political Science. This month Bobby has been staying at home with his parents, Fran and Judge Dan Ahern, during the holidays. He plans to return to D.C. early in the New Year.

— Dave McMechan

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