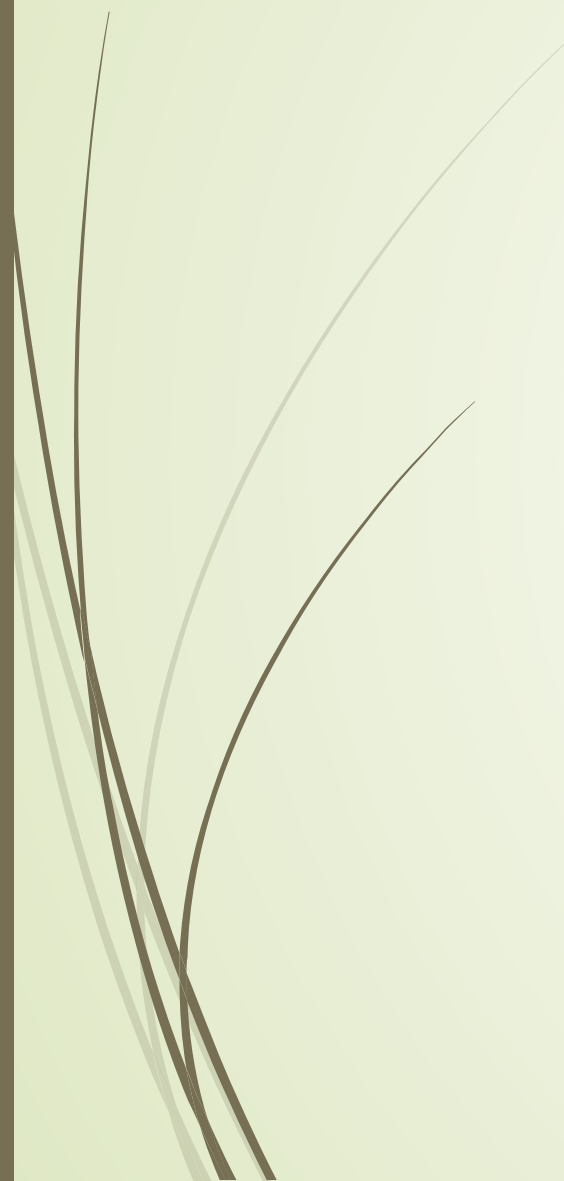






# Epidemics and Indian Country: Covid-19 and Colonialism

GLST 287: COVID-19: A Global Crisis Examined



# **La Push is Closed**



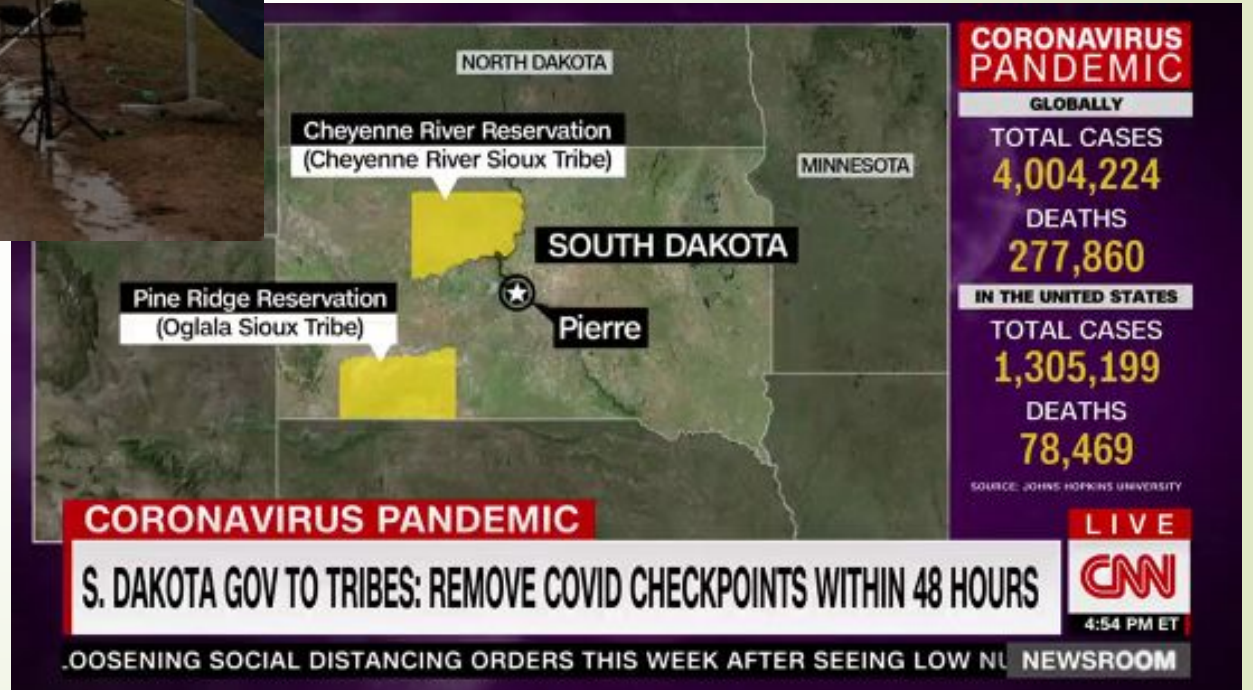
**The Quileute Reservation at La Push, WA is closed to all visitors.  
Once it is deemed safe to reopen again, we welcome all visitors  
back to our lands. Except the Cullens.**





“While the State and county have moved into phases of reopening, the reservation remains closed to all visitors until further notice. Please anticipate the reservation being closed through the remainder of the year, with a reopening not planned at this time.”









# Why?

- Epidemiology
- History
- Spiritually
- Ethics

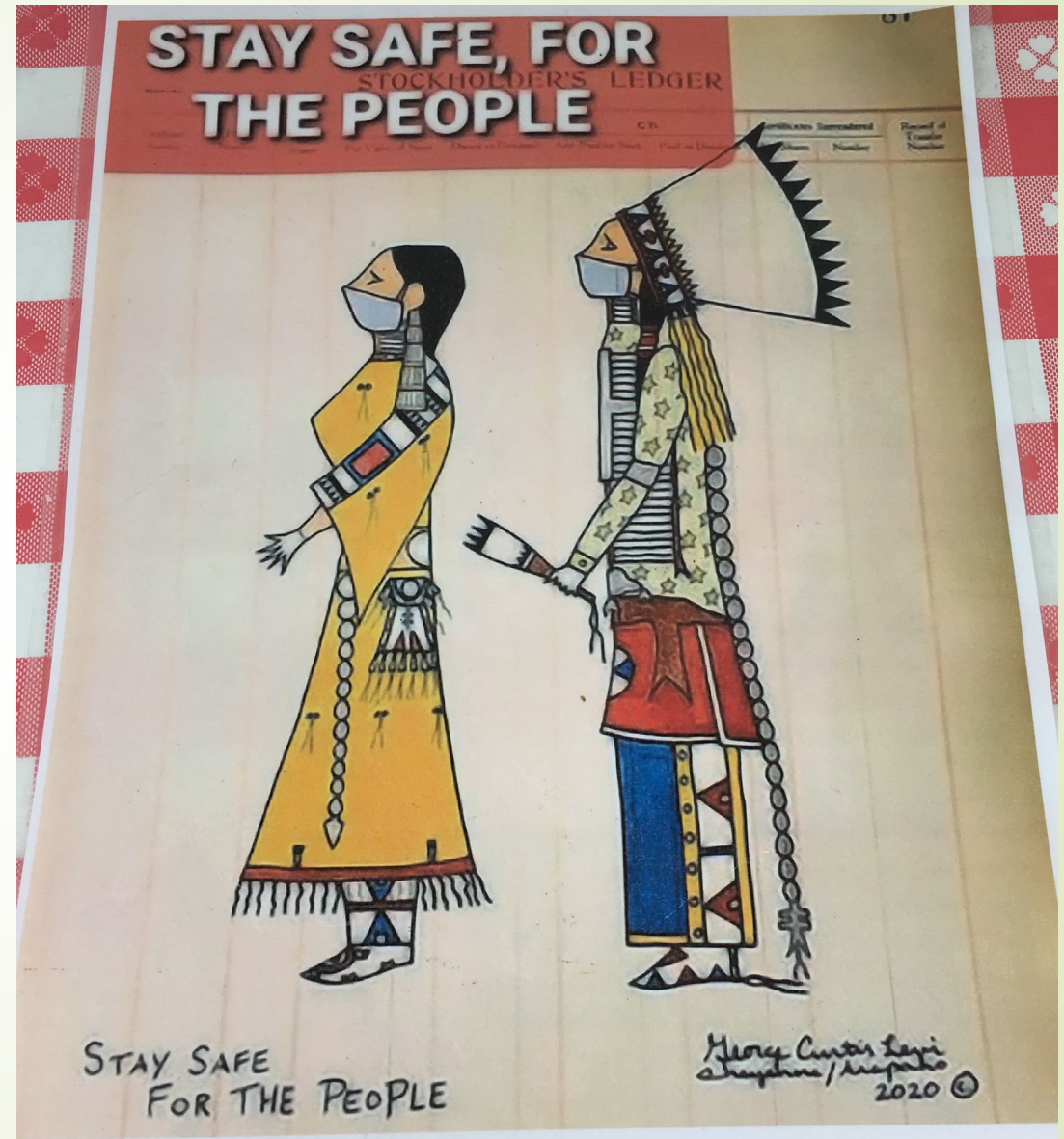


Image by George Curtis Levi (Southern Cheyenne/Arapaho)



# Epidemiology:

## *Social Determinants of Health*



*Image: Portland Area Indian Health Board*



# Epidemiology:

## *Social Determinants of Health*

- Poverty
  - \$57,600 > \$39,700
  - Less clean water, sanitation, wifi and cell service



Image: Portland Area Indian Health Board

# Epidemiology:

## *Social Determinants of Health*

- Poverty
  - \$57,600 > \$39,700
  - Less clean water, sanitation
- Twice as likely to not have insurance



*Image: Portland Area Indian Health Board*



# Epidemiology:

## *Social Determinants of Health*

- Poverty
  - \$57,600 > \$39,700
  - Less clean water, sanitation
- Twice as likely to not have insurance
- Preexisting Conditions
  - TB (6x)
  - Diabetes (2.5x)
  - Obesity
  - Kidney, Liver, & Heart Disease



*Image: Portland Area Indian Health Board*

# Epidemiology:

## *Social Determinants of Health*

- Poverty
  - \$57,600 > \$39,700
  - Less clean water, sanitation
- Twice as likely to not have insurance
- Underlying Conditions
  - TB (6x)
  - Diabetes
  - Obesity
  - Kidney, Liver, & Heart Disease
- Multigenerational households

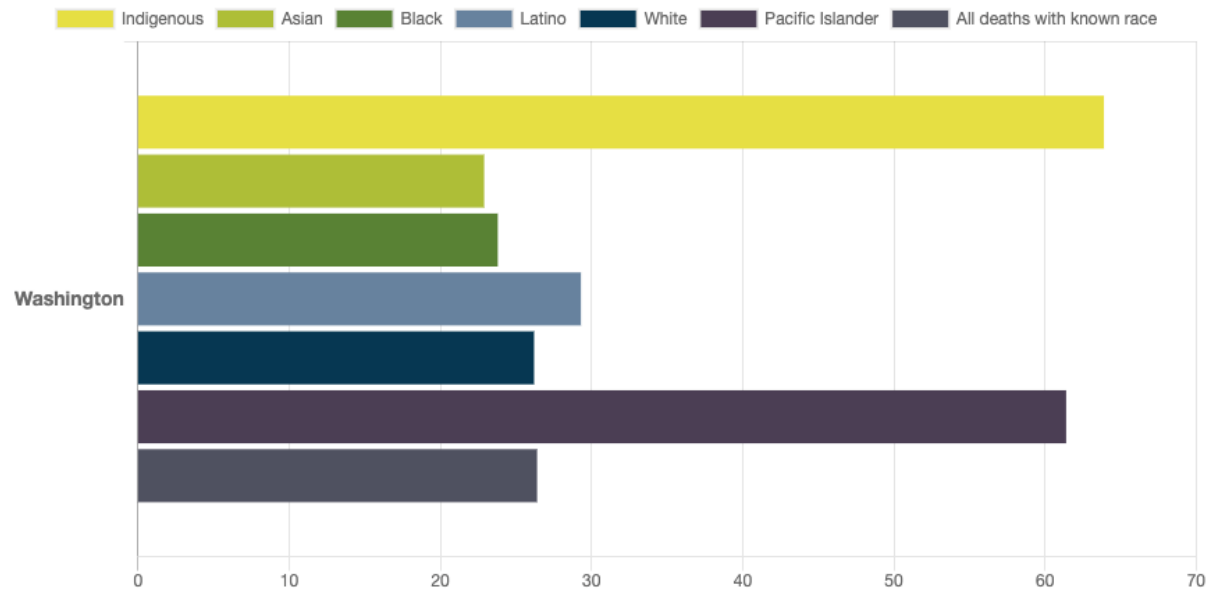


*Image: Portland Area Indian Health Board*



# Infection Rates

COVID-19 DEATHS PER 100,000 PEOPLE, THROUGH SEPT. 15, 2020



\* Latino ethnicity is reported separately from non-Hispanic race groups in Washington.

## ➤ Nationally: deaths per 100,000

➤ Indigenous: 81.9

➤ White: 46.6

## ➤ Washington:

➤ Indigenous: 63.9

➤ White: 23.8

## ➤ Alaska:

➤ Native Alaskan: 14.4

➤ White: 3.8

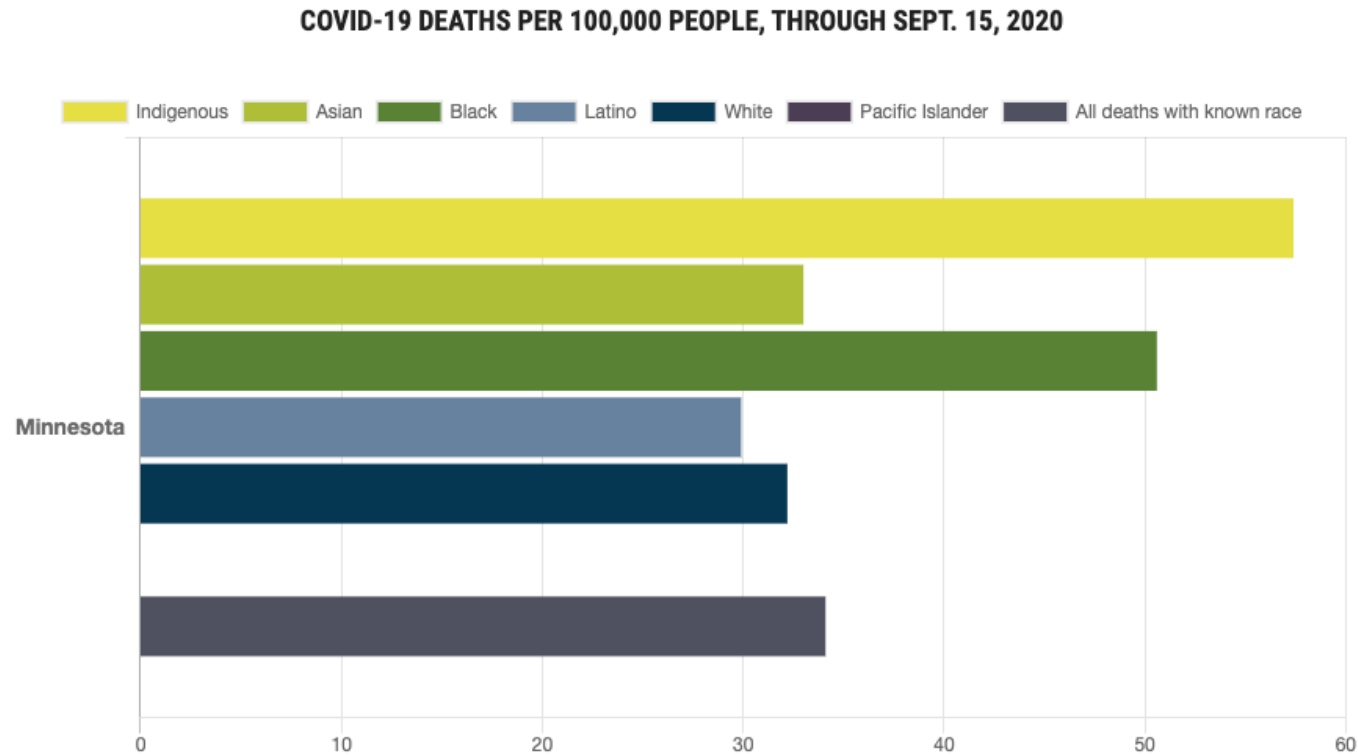
## ➤ South Dakota:

➤ Indigenous: 56.1

➤ White: 15.9

# Infection Rates

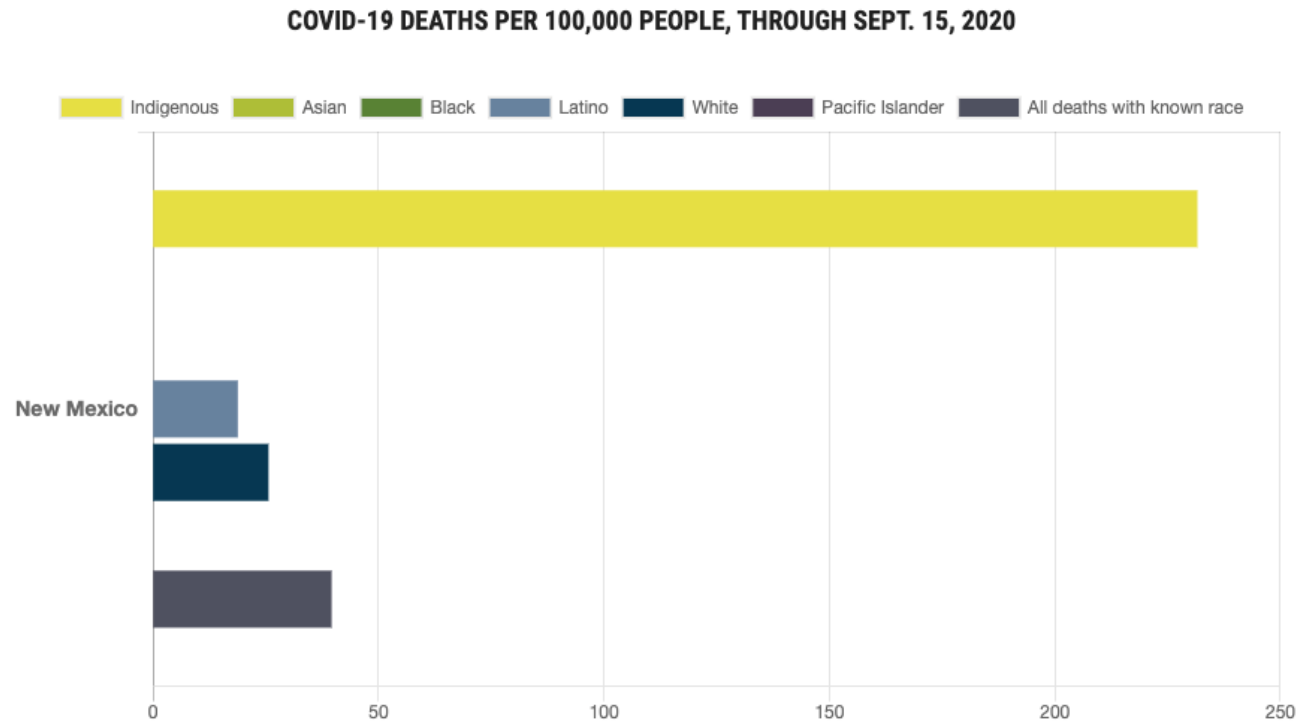
- Nationally: deaths per 100,000
  - Indigenous: 81.9
  - White: 46.6
- Minnesota:
  - Indigenous: 57.4
  - White: 32.2



*\* Latino ethnicity is reported overlapping with race groups in Minnesota.*



# Infection Rates

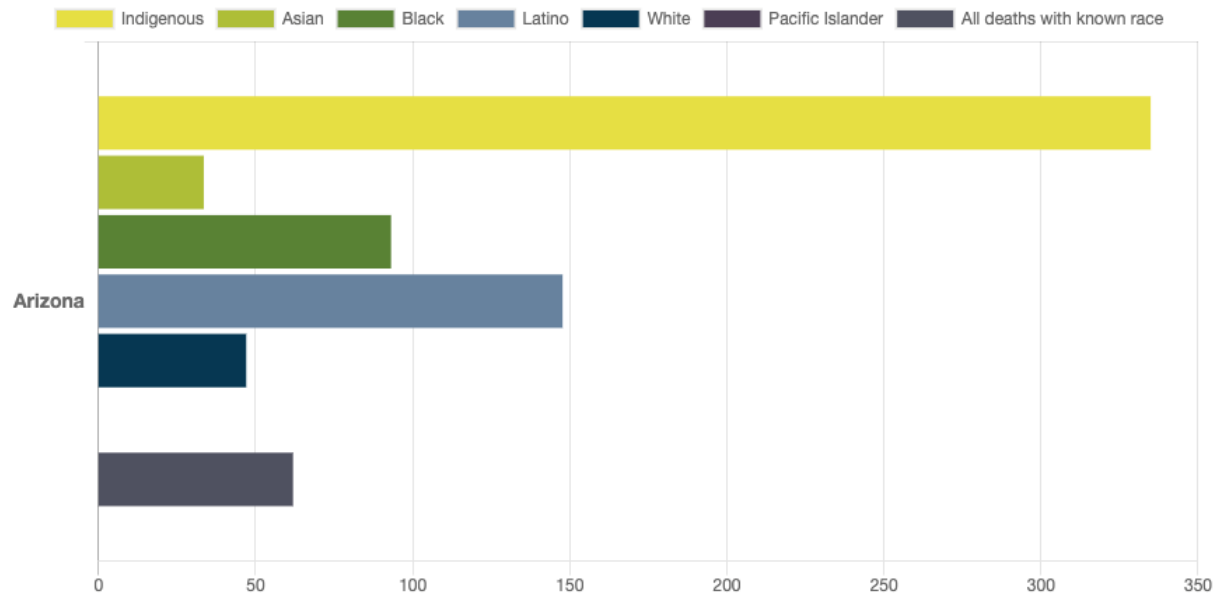


*\* Latino ethnicity is reported separately from non-Hispanic race groups in New Mexico.*

- Nationally: deaths per 100,000
  - Indigenous: 81.9
  - White: 46.6
- Minnesota:
  - Indigenous: 57.4
  - White: 32.2
- Arizona:
  - Indigenous: 203
  - White: 57.2
- New Mexico:
  - Indigenous: 231.6
  - White: 25.6

# Infection Rates

AGE-ADJUSTED COVID-19 DEATHS PER 100,000 PEOPLE, THROUGH SEPT. 15, 2020



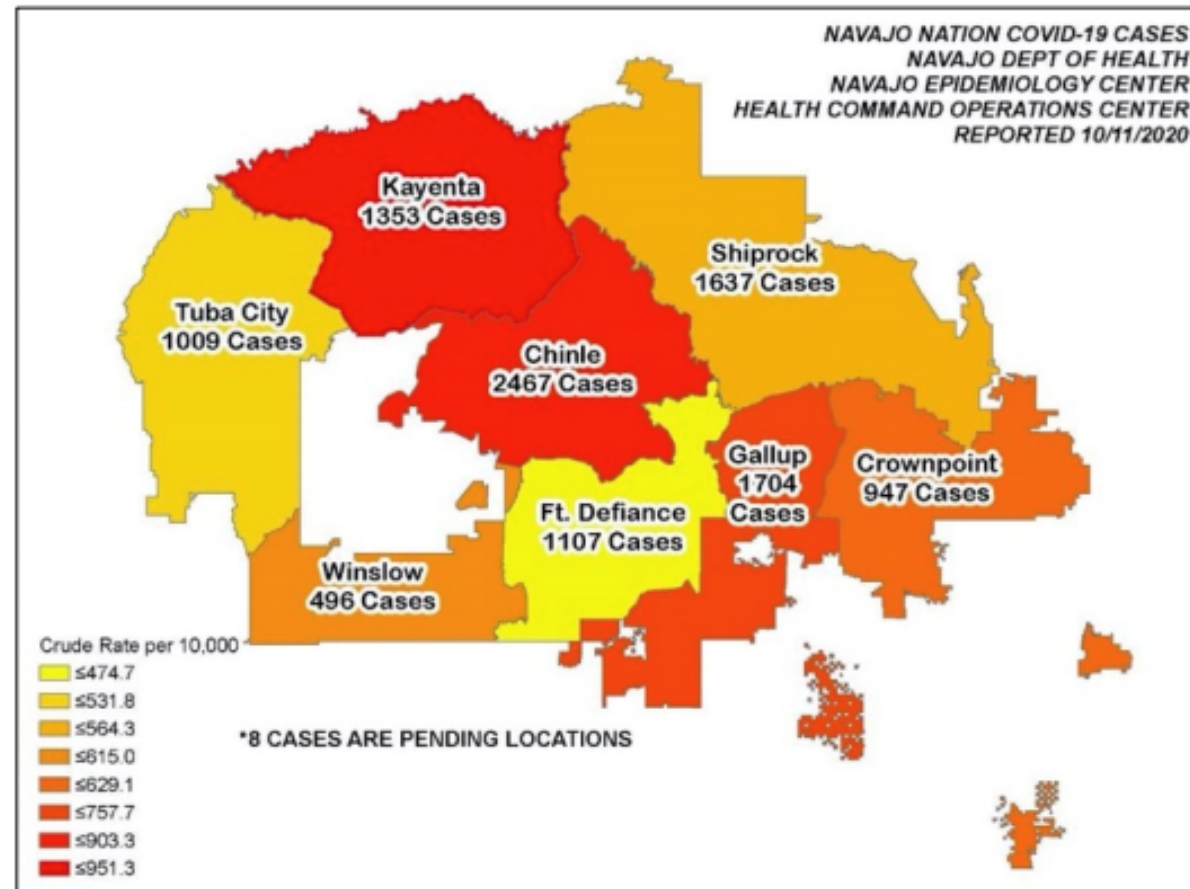
\* Arizona's Asian category also includes Pacific Islanders. Latino ethnicity is reported separately from non-Hispanic race groups in Arizona.

- Nationally: deaths per 100,000 (Adjusted for Age)
  - Indigenous: 81.9 → 124.7
  - White: 46.6 → 38.4
- South Dakota:
  - Indigenous: 56.1 → 136.6
  - White: 15.9 → 13.4
- Arizona:
  - Indigenous: 203 → 334.9
  - White: 57.2 → 25.3
- New Mexico:
  - Indigenous: 231.6 → 340
  - White: 25.6 → 16.2

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 12, 2020

### 30 new cases, 7,343 recoveries, and six more deaths related to COVID-19



**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Monday, the Navajo Department of Health, in coordination with the Navajo Epidemiology Center and the Navajo Area Indian Health Service, reported 30 new COVID-19 positive cases for the Navajo Nation and six more deaths. The total number of deaths is now 571 as of Monday. Reports indicate that 7,343 individuals have recovered from COVID-19, and 112,648 COVID-19 tests have been administered. The total number of positive COVID-19 cases is now 10,728, including two additional cases that was previously unreported due to delayed reporting.



# Highest Infection Rates

- Navajo
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw
- White Mountain Apache
- Pueblo of Zia
- Pueblo of San Felipe
- Kewa Pueblo
- Winnebego Tribe of Nebraska
- Colorado River Indian Tribe
- Yakama



Shaandiin Parrish, Miss Navajo Nation, distributing masks and hand sanitizer at a checkpoint in Chinle, AZ. (New York Times)

# Highest Infection Rates

- “We aren’t losing family members or an aunt or uncle, we are losing parts of our culture. We’ve lost dressmakers, we’ve lost artists, elders who were very fluid in our language—so when you think about an individual we’ve lost, these are important people in our community.”
  - -Mary Harrison, Health Director, Choctaw Health Center



Mississippi Choctaw drive-through testing site. (New York Times)



# Historical Context







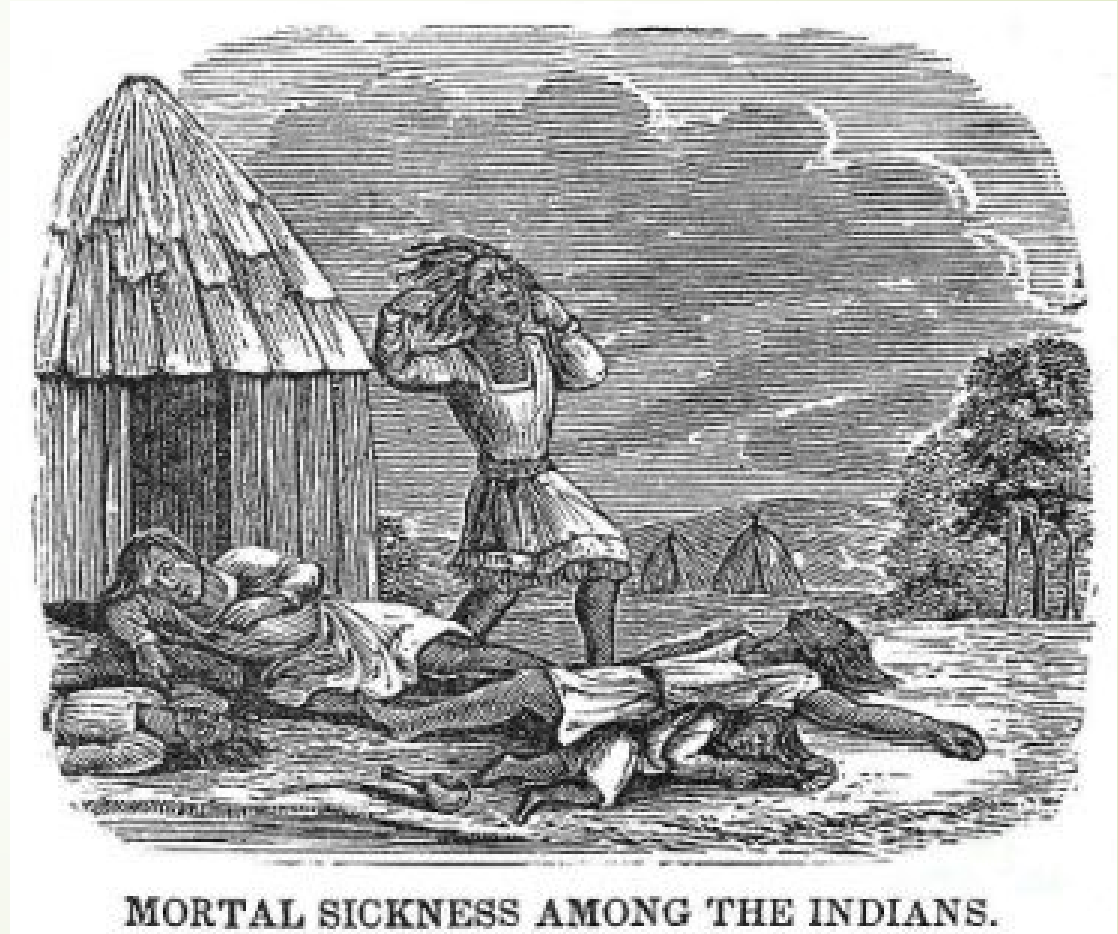
# Historical Context

- ▀ Epidemics
  - ▀ Suppression of Traditional Healing Practices
  - ▀ Historical Access to Care
  - ▀ Ethical Abuses Within Medical System
- 

# Historical Context

- Epidemic diseases:

- Smallpox
- Plague
- Cholera
- Influenza
- Malaria
- Diphtheria
- Tuberculosis
- Syphilis
- Gonorrhea



## Lord Amherst, 1763

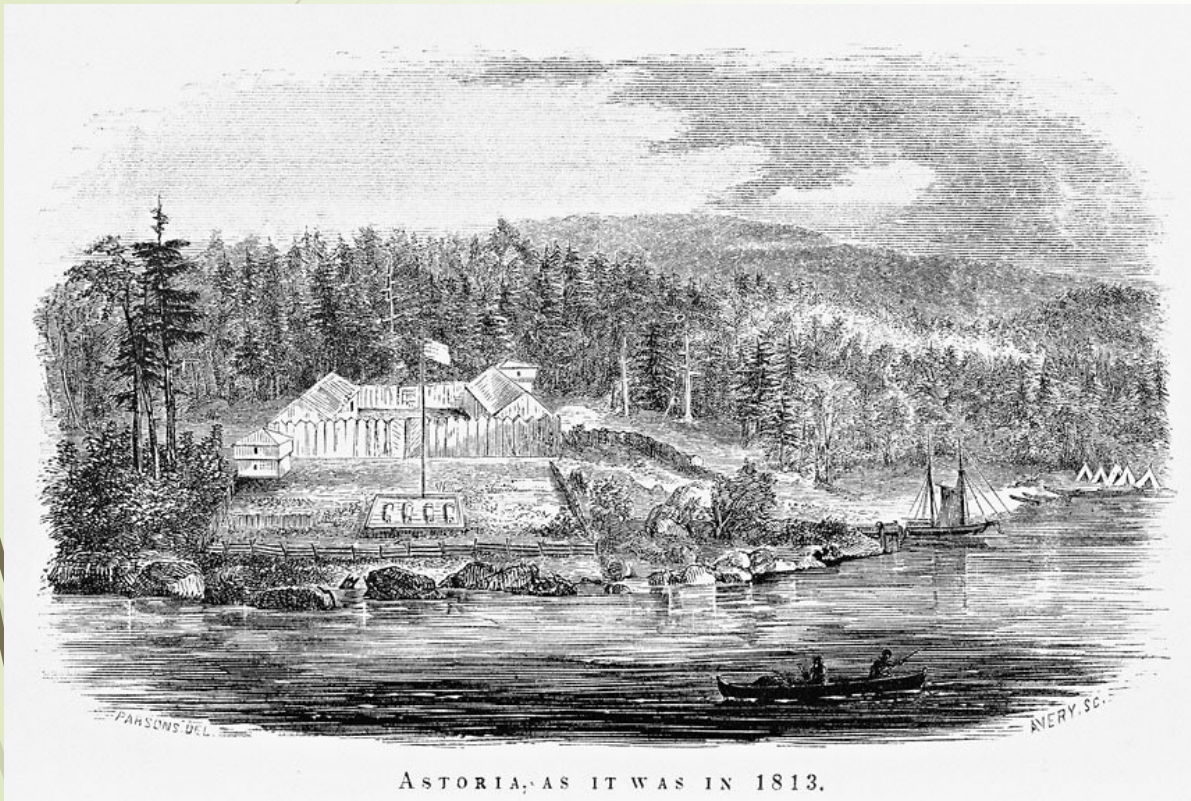
P.S.

You will do well to try to inoculate the  
Indians by means of Blanketts, as well as to try  
every other method that can serve to exterminate  
this execrable Race. I should be very glad your  
Scheme for hunting them down by Dogs could take  
Effect

Effect, but I am in at too great a Distance  
to think of that at present



# Duncan McDougal, Ft. Astor



- “The white men among you are few in number, it is true, but we are mighty in medicine.” He held up a vial for all to see. “In this bottle I hold smallpox all corked up; I have but to draw the cork to let loose the pestilence and sweep man, woman, and child from the face of the earth.”

# Historical Access to Care

- Reservations
- 1934: "Indian New Deal"
- 1955: Indian Health Service
- 1968: Community Health Representative Program
- 1976 American Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act



Puyallup Tribal Health Authority (<https://www.eptha.com/>)



# Religious and Ethical Contexts

**Give "staying home" a new  
meaning.**

**Connect with your home in  
nature and stay well.**

**#KeepYourDistance**

**#COVID19**

**#WellnessWarriors**

**[caih.jhu.edu](http://caih.jhu.edu)**



JOHNS HOPKINS  
CENTER FOR AMERICAN  
INDIAN HEALTH





# Religious and Ethical Context

- Relational Responsibility
- Multigenerational Perspective
- Care for Elders

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INDIAN HEALTH



# Relational Responsibility

- Healthy Self → Relational
  - Natural World
  - Holy People
  - Ancestors
  - Human Community



**Social distancing is beautiful.**

**Get close to what matters, and  
save lives. #DistanceToGetClose**

**#WellnessWarriors**

**#DistanceToGetClose**

**[caih.jhu.edu](http://caih.jhu.edu)**





# Relational Responsibility

- Healthy Self → Relational
  - Natural World
  - Holy People
  - Ancestors
  - Human Community
- “The basic problem is that American society is a ‘rights society’ not a ‘responsibilities’ society.” –Vine Deloria, Jr.



**Social distancing is beautiful.**

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#WellnessWarriors

#DistanceToGetClose

[caih.jhu.edu](http://caih.jhu.edu)





# Multi-Generational Perspective

- Seven Generations
- Ancestors
- Future Generations



**Social distancing is beautiful.**

**Get close to what matters, and  
save lives. #DistanceToGetClose**

#WellnessWarriors  
#DistanceToGetClose  
[caih.jhu.edu](http://caih.jhu.edu)



# Care for Elders



Vernon Blackeyes (Pine Ridge Lakota), Sarah Anderson (Omaha) and their daughter share supplies with elders on March 15, 2020, when supplies were first running low.



# Care for Elders

- An aging body, alongside a life well lived, is testament to “the maturation of knowledge and power that these bodies carry, not to mention the authority of experience accrued, tried, tested, and tempered over time... Old age itself marks a kind of religious attainment, and eldership carries a corresponding religious prestige and authority by virtue of the mastery of relatedness.”

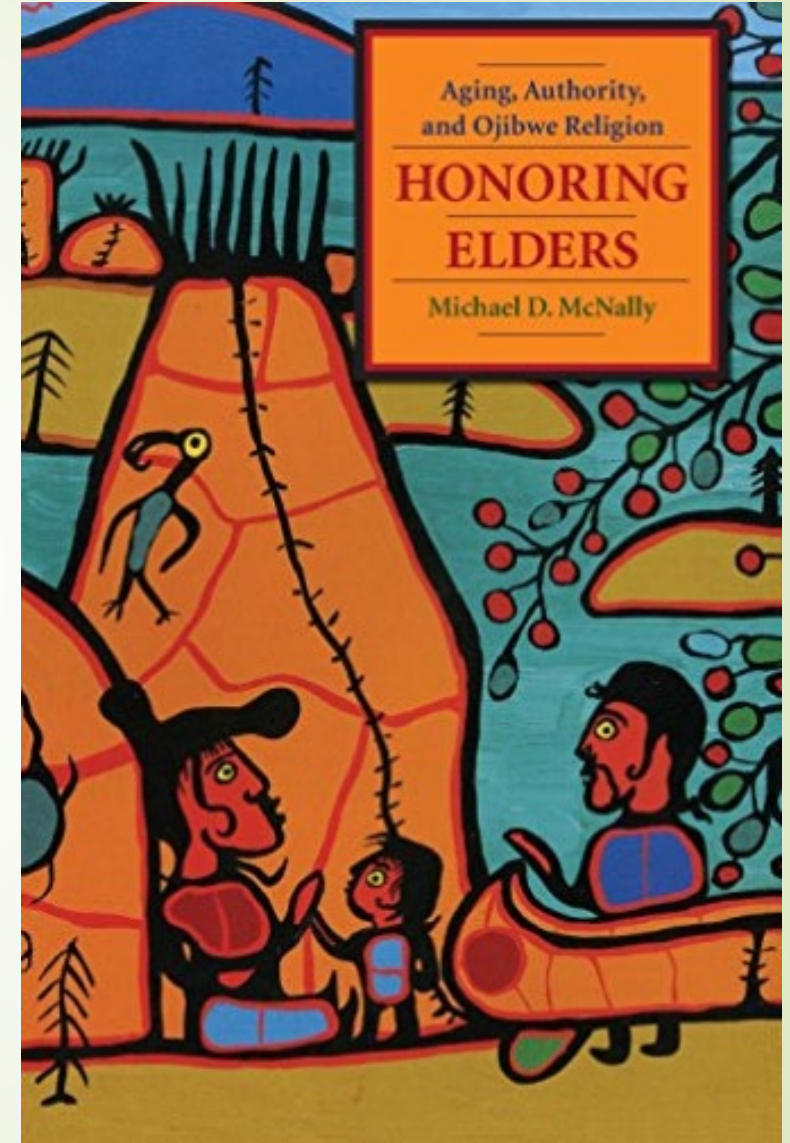


Vernon Blackeyes (Pine Ridge Lakota), Sarah Anderson (Omaha) and their daughter share supplies with elders on March 15, 2020, when supplies were first running low.



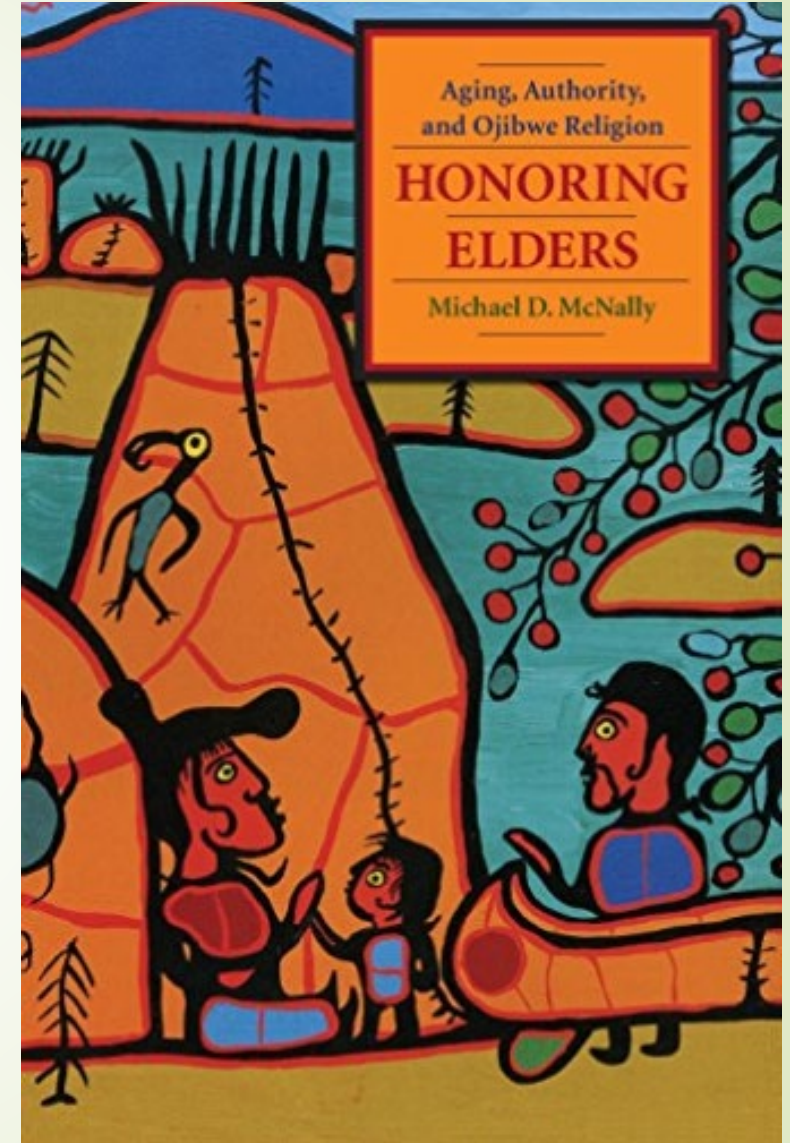
# Care for Elders

- ▶ Elders “pass on power and knowledge toward life to younger generations, in return for respect.”
- ▶ And respect is the “paradigmatic ethical relation that grounds all other relations in the social, natural, and spiritual realms.”



# Care for Elders

- ▶ If Native people “do succeed in distinctly honoring elders, it is emphatically not because they naturally do so. Instead, honoring elders has required hard work, the disciplined labor of moral teaching and the ritualized decorum that constitute the authority of elders through practices of deference.”



History. Relationality. Responsibility. Elders.



**PRAYERFUL**