



TULE RIVER TRIBE PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITY

Order of the Public Health Authority

No. C19-12, November 13, 2021

SUBJECT: Fraudulent Covid-19 Vaccine Cards

I CURRENT SITUATION

COVID-19 is a highly contagious novel coronavirus spread mainly from person to person, through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.¹ As of November 12, 2021 there have been 616 cases of Covid-19 identified at the Tule River Indian Health Clinic, Inc. and 6 deaths, 68,332 cases and 1,026 deaths in Tulare County, and 4,719,596 cases and 72,288 deaths in the State of California.² Despite many people recovering from the disease, survivors can suffer permanent heart, lung, or neurological damage from Covid-19. The Tule River Indian Reservation must take precautionary steps to protect its people, community, and elders from Covid-19.

II SUMMARY GUIDANCE

The following order is designed to protect the Tule River Indian Reservation, its residents, and its way of life. It begins at 12:01AM on November 13, 2021 and continues until otherwise noted.

Anyone presenting fraudulent vaccine verification information for the purpose of gaining entrance to an event or facility on the Tule River Indian Reservation, or for the purpose of obtaining an incentive to be vaccinated, will face a citation and/or fine of \$1,000 per the Tribe's Communicable Disease Ordinance, or any other applicable tribal, state, or federal penalties. Information on the incident will also be shared with the California Attorney General's Office and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.³

Fraudulent vaccine verification information includes, but is not limited to, incorrect name, date of birth, date of vaccination, vaccine production information or other information presented on the material, or the origin of the material.

Any material bearing fraudulent information will be seized by an officer of the Tule River Tribe Department of Public Safety per section 4.07 of the Peace and Security Ordinance.

Rationale

As has been reported by the Centers for Disease Control,⁴ large gatherings of multiple households are a huge risk for the spread of Covid-19, especially considering the delta variant. There have been examples of hundreds of people getting Covid-19 from a single event, which could ultimately lead to thousands of cases due to further transmission. Each additional attendee dramatically adds risk to others and to themselves by being at the event. On the Tule River Indian Reservation, TRIHCI and PHA staff have witnessed these so-called 'super spreader' events in the community over the last year.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Basics>

² <https://covid19.tularecounty.ca.gov/>

³ <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-issues-consumer-alert-warning-californians-about-0>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7031e2.htm>

Thus, protection from Covid-19 at large events is critical to public safety. Following the lead of the California Public Health Department,⁵ large events on the Reservation require proof of vaccine or a negative Covid-19 test no more than 72 hours before the start of the event per PHA Order C19-10. While these practices cannot eliminate risk of Covid-19, the risk can be dramatically reduced by ensuring that everyone is vaccinated or recently tested negative.

However, there are suspicions of fraudulent vaccine cards being used to enter events on the Reservation. The concern is that someone who is unvaccinated and without a recent negative test could infect a large amount of people at an event. A surge in 30 or more cases can overwhelm the healthcare and public health system on the Reservation. To protect the community, the Public Health Authority issues this order.

Definitions

- a) “Vaccine verification” is any documentation presented at the entrance of a controlled event or facility purporting to show the vaccination status of an individual seeking admission into the event.

- b) “Controlled Event/Facility” is one that has been required to verify the vaccine status of attendees to protect public health.

III ENFORCEMENT

- 1) Violation of this order may result in civil fines set out in the Tribe’s Communicable Disease Ordinance, or any other applicable tribal, state, or federal penalties.

- 1) Pursuant to Tribal Resolution No. FY2020-110, the Public Health Authority requests that Chief of Police of the Tule River Tribal Police enforce this Order to ensure compliance with its provisions. The violation of any provision of this Order may constitute an imminent threat and an immediate menace to public health.

- 2) This Order shall become effective on November 13, 2021, and will continue to be in effect unless extended, rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the Public Health Authority.

- 3) The Public Health Authority must promptly provide copies of this Order as follows: (1) by posting on the Tule River Indian Health Center Inc., website (www.trihci.org/covid-19) and all of the clinic’s social media sites (2) by posting at the Tule River Tribal Council Administration Building and requesting that the Tribe distribute to all other tribal entities, departments, and organizations for immediate posting, and (3) by providing a copy to any member of the public requesting a copy. In addition, the owner, manager, or operator of any facility that is likely to be impacted by this Order is strongly encouraged to post a copy of this Order onsite and to provide a copy to any member of the public requesting a copy.

- 4) If any provision of this Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, then the remainder of the Order, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or

⁵ <https://covid19.ca.gov/mega-events/>

circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this Order are severable.

Signature: *Eric Coles*
Tribal Public Health Officer

Date: November 12, 2021