



"The People's Paper"

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\$1

# MHA Nation COVID-19 Task Force Responds to Community Needs

Lisa Lone Fight, M.S.

Office of the Chairman, MHA Nation

The world has been traumatized by the COVID-19 pandemic, and people need a source to answer their immediate critical questions: What is an essential employee? How do I protect my family? How do I get tested? This is the job that the members of the MHA Nation COVID-19 Task Force have taken on. The Task Force was formed by the MHA Nation Tribal Council. "Most of the key members of the Task Force are considered essential employees, so while serving on the Task Force many also have to complete the responsibilities of their official positions," says MHA Nation Tribal Chairman Mark Fox.

## THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

The MHA Nation Tribal Council has chosen an Incident Command System (ICS) that operates under a Unified Command (UC), because no single segment, agency or tribal entity has the authority or resources to manage an incident on its own.

The ICS was initially created by firefighters in the early 1970s as a way to coordinate efforts in battling wildfires. It has since been adopted FEMA, other First Responders, and law enforcement to deal with

a variety of incidents ranging from simple traffic incidents to large scale, pre-planned events. The ICS ensures accountability, the efficient use of resources and provides the expertise of those included.

The ICS has four main priorities — Life Safety, Incident Stabilization, Property Conservation, and Return to Normal. The primary groups that make up the Incident Command System are planning,

operations, logistics, finance/administration, and public information officers. The MHA Nation Task Force includes all of these positions.

## SHIFTING FOCUS

The MHA Nation Task Force (Unified Command System) is currently shifting focus from preparing for the arrival of the virus, to direct response efforts given the rise of confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Mountrail County as well as McLean and McKenzie Counties. Public safety agencies within the MHA Nation operate in conjunction with the Unified Command System, which has set goals and delegated responsibilities among tribal entities, communities, and segments.

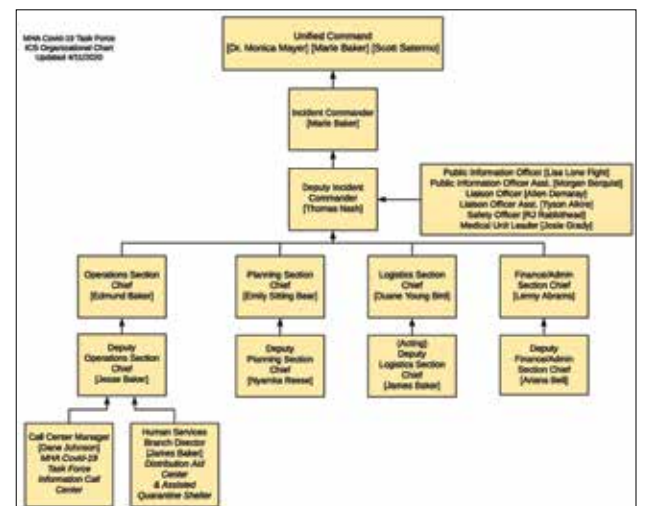
Marle Baker said it's similar to First Responders setting up an Instant Command Post at a fire. It is then decided which agencies: police, security emergency medical service for example, are responsible for which tasks.

"This situation requires unified command, because it crosses the boundaries of segments, counties, cities and all other entities. The virus is everywhere," Baker said.

Baker is one of three in charge of the command system; the others are Dr. Monica Mayer and Scott Satermo.

This centralized leadership typically allows for quick answers to potential problems that arise during the pandemic, Baker explained. If an ambulance transfers a COVID-positive patient, for instance, the vehicle and its team of paramedics will need at least a few hours to sanitize themselves and the vehicle, and once again, outfit it with plastic lining throughout the entire interior. While that vehicle is out of commission, the command center can pull another ambulance from elsewhere on the reservation to cover the gap in service, if needed, allowing safety response to keep running.

Meanwhile, partnerships with local hospitals will allow the command system's logistics team to stay up to date on COVID-19 patient load at the hospital. Should the hospital approach that limit, the team will work to find space for patients. If first responders are running short of personal protective equipment, logistics will find more. Meanwhile, those first responder agencies can continue focusing on public



View large size chart on page 6

safety.

Another team is managing public information and messaging, this includes tasks like ensuring the public receives accurate and scientifically vetted information, meeting with the media and dispelling rumors. The public information team is also spearheading a public information campaign focused on protecting elders and the strength of MHA values.

The financial team is constantly capturing information on expenditures for potential federal reimbursement. They are also exploring every opportunity for tribal funding from Congress included in the two trillion-dollar CARES Act. This is vital because some CARES funding is first come, first served, and will run out soon. Again, this is in addition to regular job duties.

"We're trying to make the command center a one-stop-shop. We also have a strong online presence including a website and Facebook page and a call-in center staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer the questions of community members," Baker said.

## DOING TWO JOBS

Marle Baker who is the Incident Commander for the Task Force is also a firefighter. "Fires don't care whether there's a virus. Emergencies don't just stop." Baker says. Sometimes it said that people wear two hats, Baker can be found wearing a fireman's

# MHA Chairman Community Update Highlights Current Key Topics and Concerns



**Lisa Lone Fight, M.S.**

Office of the Chairman, MHA Nation

Chairman Mark N. Fox highlighted the strategic and aggressive nature of the MHA Nation's efforts to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 virus in the first of many updates to keep the communities and Three Affiliated Tribes (TAT) segments aware of the situations facing the TAT. This press release aims to summarize the first update provided by Chairman Fox.

"In Mountrail County, there are 20 confirmed cases of COVID-19 infection with 17 being on the Fort Berthold Reservation. The Tribe is looking at a testing event to help get an understanding of how this is impacting us and how to strategize in order to combat this virus. In North Dakota, one of the good things that is happening is aggressive state testing. By Easter, we should see around ten thousand individuals tested within the state," Fox said.

Fox has been stressing the importance of social distancing and

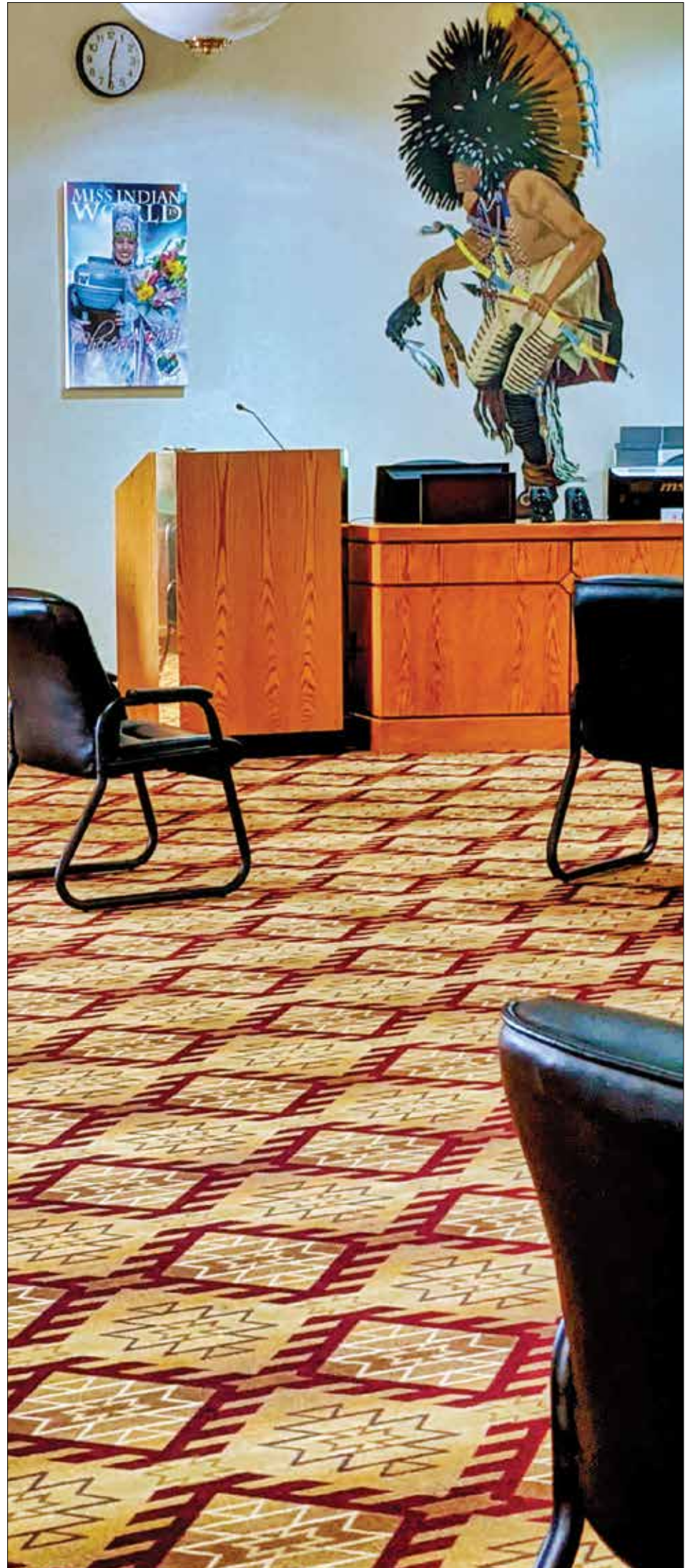
other mitigation efforts. "Some of you are doing an awesome job and are strong proponents among our people in stressing social distancing," Chairman Fox emphasized.

The Chairman continued to highlight other areas of increased focus.

"The curfew is in place and will continue. Issues are arising in the community regarding social distancing, as the children are not in school. We ask that parents help educate their children on understanding why they cannot go to their friend's house or gather in groups at the park," Fox stated. "We don't want them wandering and getting into large groups and potentially spreading the disease if some are infected, and then they will take that back to their homes. It is key that curfew, disbanding, and social distancing are adhered to."

The Chairman stated that there are exceptions to the mitigation policy. The need to get necessary supplies, travel to and from work, as well as to check on relatives. Wakes, funerals,

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## Community Update

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and emergencies are exempt from this "stay-at-home-order," as well. Chairman Fox stressed that this policy does not mean you cannot go outside and enjoy time with your family.

"If a family has their own land, they are welcome to enjoy themselves and get some exercise outside. If families are just enjoying their time together as a family, and not interacting with others in the public, that is fine. Outside activities at their own homes and properties are encouraged," said Fox.

Fox also reported on the tribe's minimal staffing policy.

"Minimal staffing has been in effect for 2 weeks now, but as the infection numbers grew, we went to essential staff only. This has seemed to drastically reduce the spread of the virus," Chairman Fox declared.

Modeling adherence to its own social distancing requirements, the Tribal Business Council called a special TBC meeting on a limited agenda, with no audience on Wednesday, April 8, 2020. Business was conducted quickly with council members calling in via conference call.

"We continue to operate and have to be operating. We have to be viable. We have to be effective and have to have our essentials on staff and ready to roll. This includes our COVID-19 Task Force, medical personnel, security, and law enforcement. These are essentials. When people need help, we get it to them and we continue to operate," stated Chairman Fox.

Fox also addressed key issues of funding under the CARES Act, as well as tribal disbursements. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress with overwhelming, bipartisan support and signed into law by President Trump on March 27th, 2020. This over \$2 trillion economic relief package delivers on the Trump Administration's commitment to protecting the American people from the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19. "The MHA Nation continues to work with state and federal officials to ensure we are obtaining the resources that we need. We have a Federal Funding Acquisition Task Force as well. Their job is to make sure we do not miss out on any funding opportunities as a tribe," said Chairman Fox.

The tribal chairman continued on to the subject of tribal disbursements.

"If you have not received your

distribution yet, you will. The payments have been spread out between April and May, with two checks for \$500 (each). If you do not receive payment, it is recommended you contact the MHA Nation's Chief Financial Officer, Whitney Bell," Fox said.

The Chairman also highlighted a strong working relationship with both the state and federal governments. He gave the recent testing as an example.

"In coordination with the state and federal government, as well as the Army National Guard, we are conducting a drive-through testing event on Saturday," Fox said.

Fox clarified that there are a limited number of tests, according to state officials. The tribal administration and COVID-19 Task Force have put together a priority list of staff including essential and Task Force staff.

"We are testing for a very important purpose. Strategically, if we can understand what the prevalence of the disease is, we can adjust our emergency needs, adjust our strategy and how we will push back on COVID-19. When we test, it gives us an opportunity for those who test positive to have their needs addressed," Fox said. Fox also felt that its important the people understand that there is nobody more or less susceptible to this disease.

"We have seen movie stars, world leaders, famous athletes, and many others being impacted by this," Fox noted.

He continued to explain that the MHA Nation's frontline workers have been doing what they can to help mitigate the spread, as well as take care of those who test positive and that as a nation, there is a need to decrease any stigma attached to testing positive and help one another.

"We are now able to do our own testing, making MHA Nation one of the only tribes within the US that have this capability. We will be collecting data and moving forward with the services we are providing," Fox said.

Fox concluded by reiterating the tribe's commitment and highlighting the array of resources available to the community.

"We have the Task Force call-in number and Elder's hotline, as well as a toll-free line to call. These lines are available 24 hours a day to ensure our people get the help they need," Fox said.

The phone numbers mentioned by Chairman Fox are:

MHA Nation COVID-19 Task Force and Elders hotline – 701-627-7300

Toll-free line (for tribal members living off the reservation) – 1-833-877-0150



## EDITOONS - BY MARTY TWO BULLS



"The People's Paper"

## THE MANDAN, HIDATSA AND ARIKARA TIMES

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# Drive Up Coronavirus Testing on the FBIR

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Office of the Chairman, MHA Nation

Drive-through coronavirus testing was performed for the first time in Mountrail County on Saturday. This test is a model program for the state of North Dakota. Mountrail county was selected because of its disproportionate rate of COVID-19 positive tests. This caused Governor Burgum of North Dakota to work with the MHA Nation COVID-19 Task Force to designate Mountrail county as a hotspot, enabling deployment of the state's mobile testing unit.

The site opened early Saturday morning to collect samples from First Responders and other front-line workers including health and emergency personnel, essential staff,

and others working to maintain continuity of essential services and meet the challenge of COVID-19 on the Fort Berthold.

Please remember that testing is not a cure and does not confer any health benefits. At this point, it is meant to assure that those working on the front lines are healthy and to reduce any potential spread of the virus.

Tests for the public are available at Elbowoods Memorial Health Center in New Town, ND. If you are experiencing any COVID-19 type symptoms including, but not limited to, shortness of breath, fever, coughing, body aches, loss or change of your sense of taste, smell, or unusual headaches, please call Elbowoods Clinic at 701-627-7641.



Chairman Fox addresses the National Guard travel members and first responders



# Task Force

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protective gear one moment and a Tyvek protection suit another.

"There is no employee position entitled Task Force member," says Mark Fox Chairman of the Three Affiliated Tribes. "These dedicated individuals are doing at least two and sometimes the job of three people."

In order to provide the greatest service to the community, it was decided early on that Task Force members would be tribal and community members, and in most cases employees. This allowed them to use their understanding of the culture and community to move very quickly in the protection of Fort Berthold Reservation residents.

"We live here. Most are from here. No one is a number to us everyone is a

relative, and there aren't really limits to what we'll do in helping our relatives." says Task Force member Scott Satermo. "We all have our day jobs," Satermo continues, "but when it comes down to priorities, the Task Force comes first, because we are protecting our elders, our families, and our future."

### A BUSY GROUP

In addition to their regular positions and family responsibilities, there is an extensive list of duties that the Task Force members face. Key actions of the Task Force include: Task Force online Operational Briefings via Zoom, every 48 hours between the state, county, and local entities to collaborate and exchange information, and to discuss critical issues affecting the communities. Local interface with businesses and collaborative sharing of community member questions

and potential solutions. Creation of a website page for COVID-19 resources and time-sensitive social media postings. A list of COVID-19 resources has been developed and is available at [www.mhanation/coronavirus](http://www.mhanation/coronavirus). This webpage allows community members to find vital information on the status of COVID-19 testing, confirmed cases, and other resources. The page is continually updated with the latest information. Key issues are also being shared on social media platforms. In addition, the Task Force has compiled several one-page fact sheets with important information and valuable resources.

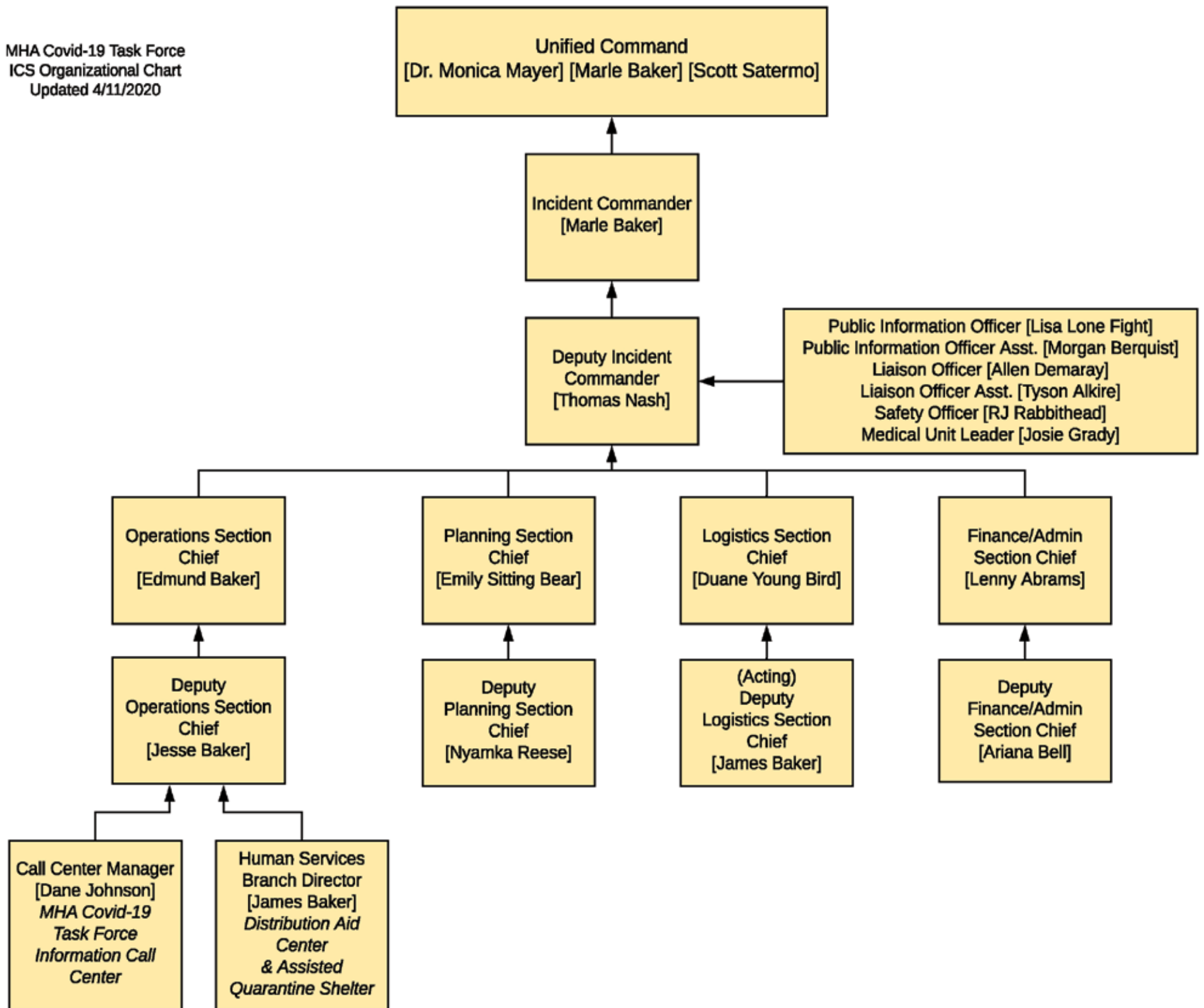
"It is our responsibility as a community to work collaboratively to halt the spread of COVID-19 and return the MHA Nation to a healthier and more prosperous place," stated

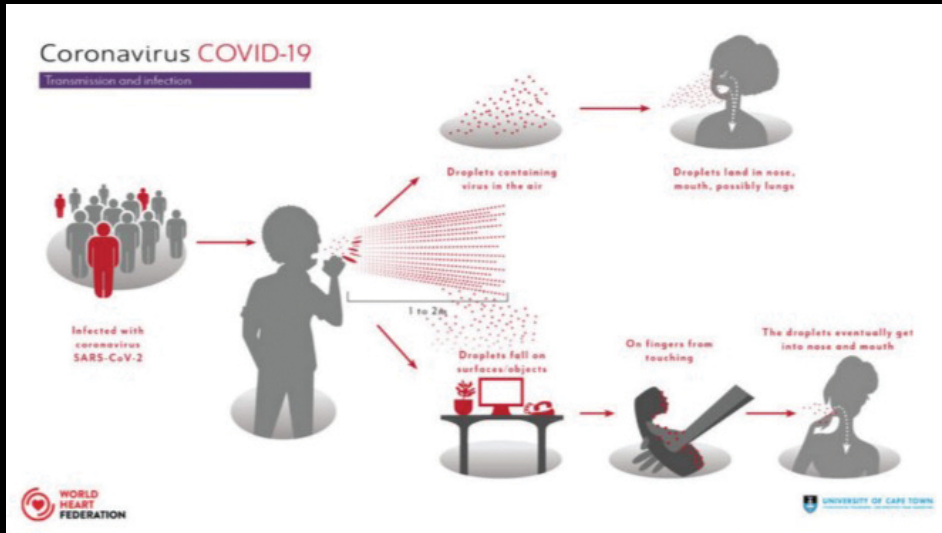
Marle Baker. "The virus does not recognize boundaries and does not know job descriptions. We all do what we have to do when we have to do it."

"We put an enormous burden on Task Force members," Fox says. "MHA people are courageous people and the Task Force represents the most committed. They are strong, but remember everyone needs support. We have always supported our warriors and remember in this battle with the coronavirus, these are part of our frontline fighting force. Please, treat them with the genuine respect they deserve, and help them in whatever way you can. They're fighting for us."

*In the next Issue of the MHA Times we will have Picture Biography of the members in the ICS Organizational Chart.*

MHA Covid-19 Task Force  
ICS Organizational Chart  
Updated 4/11/2020





# Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

## • MYTH BUSTERS •

**FACT:** COVID-19 can be transmitted in all areas, including those with hot and humid climates

**FACT:** Taking a hot bath does not prevent the COVID-19

**FACT:** The new coronavirus CANNOT be transmitted through mosquito bites.

**FACT:** The new coronavirus is unlikely to be transmitted through goods manufactured in China or any country reporting COVID-19 Use a disinfectant to clean the surface of the package, if in doubt.

**FACT:** Spraying alcohol or chlorine all over your body will not kill viruses that have already entered your body.

**FACT:** Vaccines against pneumonia will not protect you against the new coronavirus However, vaccination against respiratory illnesses is highly recommended to protect your health.

**FACT:** There is no evidence that eating garlic can help prevent COVID-19

**FACT:** You don't need to wear

masks if you don't have symptoms of COVID-19 Only those with symptoms and those who are care-givers or healthcare workers should wear masks.

**FACT:** Thermal scanners can only effectively detect people with fever from COVID-19. However, scanners cannot detect people who are infected but don't yet have fever.

**FACT:** Hand dryers are NOT effective in killing the new coronavirus.

**FACT:** There are no antibiotics available to prevent/treat COVID-19

**FACT:** There is no evidence that pets can be infected with the new coronavirus.

**FACT:** UV lamps should not be used to sterilize hands or other areas of skin

**FACT:** People of all ages can be infected by COVID-19 Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) are more vulnerable.

Source: www.who.int

IANS GRAPHICS

# LOW RISK ISN'T NO RISK



Even if you are less than 60 years old and do not have an underlying health condition, you can still become sick with COVID-19.

- Clean your hands often
- Cough or sneeze in your bent elbow – not your hands!
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Limit social gatherings and time spent in crowded places
- Avoid close contact with someone who is sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

## Allergies, Cold, Flu or COVID-19 Virus?

Here's how to tell the difference between allergy symptoms and the novel 2019 Coronavirus.

	ALLERGIES	COLD	INFLUENZA	COVID-19
Symptoms				
Symptoms begin	Gradually	Gradually	Abruptly	Within 14 days of exposure
Symptoms last	Allergy season	4 – 10 days	5 – 7 days	Varies by Person
Body aches	–	✓	✓	Sometimes
Chills	–	Less Common	✓	Sometimes
Dry cough	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exposure to germs	–	✓	✓	✓
Fatigue/Weakness	Sometimes	✓	✓	✓
Fever	–	Less Common	✓	✓
Headaches	✓	Less Common	✓	Sometimes
Itchy eyes	✓	–	–	–
Nasal Congestion	✓	✓	✓	Less Common
Nausea/Vomiting/Diarrhea	–	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Runny nose	✓	–	–	Less Common
Sneeze	✓	✓	✓	Sometimes
Sore throat	Sometimes	✓	✓	Sometimes
Shortness of breath	Sometimes	Less Common	✓	✓
Symptoms get worse	–	–	✓	✓

**Think You Have COVID-19?**  
Stay home and away from others • Monitor symptoms • Rest • Cover coughs and sneezes • Wash hands with soap and water often • Treat symptoms  
Contact your doctor if you have a fever, cough, difficulty breathing or existing chronic disease.



Around 95% of people who have been sick with COVID-19 to date have recovered or are recovering.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE MHA NATION'S RESPONSE TO COVID19**  
 Covid19 Taskforce Call-in Center 24hrs a day 7 days a week  
**Local: 701-627-7300 Toll Free: 833-877-0150**  
 MHA Nation Chairman's Office \*Tribal Business Council \*Covid19 Task Force  
[www.mhanation.com/coronavirus](http://www.mhanation.com/coronavirus) facebook (mha nation covid-19)