

summer, the number of Americans who reported that they were avoiding public or crowded places and contact with others started declining before reaching its lowest point in October.

“Remarkably, the state with the lowest level of social distancing in the spring (Idaho) had a higher level of social distancing than the state with the highest level of social distancing in the fall (Hawaii),” the researchers write.

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Indigenous people in Brazil will be prioritized for vaccine; advocates urge Canada to follow suit

By **Antonia Noori Farzan**

Indigenous people in Brazil will be among the first to get a coronavirus vaccine, the country's health ministry announced this week, [according to Reuters](#).

Like many other nations, Brazil also plans to prioritize vaccinating health-care workers and the elderly. But the decision to immunize Indigenous people before the general population appears to be a unique one — though advocates for Native Canadians are [calling for the government there to follow suit](#).

Brazil's Indigenous population has been especially hard hit by one of the world's worst coronavirus outbreaks, taking such a devastating toll on the elderly that [some languages are now facing extinction](#). The country has the second-highest death toll and third-highest tally of coronavirus cases worldwide, and Indigenous communities have repeatedly [protested](#) the lack of support that they have received from President Jair Bolsonaro's far-right government during the pandemic. This summer, numerous Indigenous leaders [told The Washington Post](#) that they desperately needed more health workers, basic medical equipment and coronavirus tests, and had been left to try to treat virus symptoms with traditional herbal remedies.

The preliminary plan announced by Brazil's health department appears to have taken these concerns into account, and includes Indigenous people along with people over 75, health-care workers and residents of long-term care facilities over the age of 60 in the first priority group. The second phase of the vaccine rollout would target all people between 60 and 74, followed by people who are considered high-risk because of preexisting health conditions. Prison inmates and guards and front line workers including teachers are included in the final phase before the vaccine is made available for the general population.

Native people throughout the world have been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus. In Canada, the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations is arguing that the high rate of underlying conditions means that Indigenous residents need to be first in line for a vaccine.

“Our First Nations communities have higher rates of diabetes, heart disease, asthma and other health conditions that put them at an even higher risk of serious complications or even life-threatening problems if they contract covid-19,” the group said in a [Wednesday statement](#).

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