Structural Obstacles to Contact Tracing During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Roadmap

• Viewing contact tracing through a lens of the ethics of care
• Structural issues affecting contact tracing
  • Housing
  • Employment
  • Health Care Access
  • Language
  • Trust
  • Transportation/Resources
• Building contact tracing focused on care
Ethics of care

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iaCpAFypq8
“The ethics of care begins with a conception of moral life as a network of relationships with specific people, and it sees ‘living well’ as caring for those people, attending to their needs, and maintain their trust”

Structural Issues

• Housing
• Employment
• Health Care Access
• Language
• Trust
• Transportation/Resources
Age-adjusted COVID-19-associated hospitalization rates by race and ethnicity

COVID-NET, March 1 - June 6, 2020

COVID-19-associated hospitalization rates are highest among people who are non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic Black, and Hispanic/Latino.

Who is impacted the most?
• A CDC analysis of about 1,500 hospitalizations in 14 states found that black people made up 33% of the hospitalizations, although they made up only 18 percent of the population in the areas studied.
• In Chicago, African Americans account for 29% of population, but have suffered 70% of COVID-19 related deaths of those whose ethnicity is known.
• In New Mexico, Native Americans are only 11% of the population, but account for nearly 37% of the COVID-19 infections and 26% of the deaths.
Why the different rates of infection?

HISTORICAL AND CURRENT PRACTICES OF DISCRIMINATION

The Fullest Look Yet at the Racial Inequity of Coronavirus


What you can expect to happen

If you were around someone diagnosed with COVID-19

If you were around someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, someone from the health department may call you.

Stay home away from others:

- Stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19, such as older adults and people with other medical conditions, if possible.
- If you have been around someone with COVID-19, stay home away from others for 14 days (self-quarantine) after your last contact with that person and monitor your health.
- If you have a fever, cough or other symptoms of COVID-19, stay home and away from others (except to get medical care or testing, if recommended).
- If you need support or assistance while in self-quarantine, your health department or community organizations may be able to provide assistance.

Monitor your health:

- Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19. Remember, symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to COVID-19.

For COVID-19, a close contact is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting from 48 hours (or 2 days) before the person had any symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19.

Answer the phone call from the health department. If someone from the health department calls you, answer the call to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in your community.
Structural Factors in Housing

Housing

- Nowhere to keep away and isolate
- Multigenerational families
- Not working for two weeks can affect rent/food/etc

![Figure 4](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2019/08/07/472617/systemic-inequality-displacement-exclusion-segregation/)

Structural Factors in Health/Public Health

Past poor experiences/lack of trust

Lack of diverse providers

Lack of testing

Not enough contact tracers, especially from marginalized communities

Health literacy
Structural Factors in Employment

Work Conditions

- Low wage/essential workers—cannot work from home
- Lack of sick leave
- Lack of benefits/child care
- Need for salary
- Threats from employers for cooperating with contact tracers

Language Barriers

8:30 a.m. Language barriers, fear hinders immigrant contact tracing

Only a handful of contact tracers working to slow COVID-19 in 125 communities near Chicago speak Spanish, despite significant Hispanic populations. Churches and advocacy groups in the Houston area are trying to convince immigrants to cooperate when health officials call. And in California, immigrants are being trained as contact tracers to ease mistrust.
Latinos' health is threatened by coronavirus misinformation as well as fear, distrust.

For many, the reluctance to get tested or seek treatment stems from fear of deportation in a community with a significant percentage of immigrants.
Lack of Trust/Fear

Answer the phone call from the health department. If someone from the health department calls you, answer the call to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in your community.

- Discussions with health department staff are confidential. This means that your personal and medical information will be kept private and only shared with those who may need to know, like your health care provider.
- Your name will not be shared with those you came in contact with. The health department will only notify people you were in close contact with (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) that they might have been exposed to COVID-19.

Tell the health department staff if you develop symptoms of COVID-19. If your symptoms worsen or become severe, you should seek emergency medical care.
Members of the White Mountain Apache tribe in Arizona have been infected with coronavirus at more than 10 times the rate of people in the state as a whole, yet their death rate is far lower.

On Native American Land, Contact Tracing Is Saving Lives

As the coronavirus spread on the Fort Apache reservation in Arizona, medical teams sought out residents who might have been exposed. The effort paid off in unexpected ways.

By Gina Kolata   Photographs by Tomás Karmelo Amaya

Aug. 13, 2020
The basic principles we see for evaluating a TACT are:

- Not displacing non-technical measures
- Voluntary
- Non-punitive
- Built with public health professionals
- Privacy-preserving
- Non-discriminatory
- Minimal reliance on central authorities
- Data minimization everywhere
- No data leakage
- Measurable impact
- Have an exit strategy
- Narrowly-tailored to target a specific epidemic
- Auditable and fixable
- Sustainably maintained
THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Contact Tracers In Massachusetts Order Milk And Help With Rent. Here’s Why

August 11, 2020 · 2:01 PM ET

MARTHA BEBINGER

FROM RECOVERY '21

IUPUI, Robert H. McKinney School of Law
Goals

• Gain trustworthiness
• Employer cooperation and support
• Legislative support
• Helping marginalized communities
  • Community contact tracers
  • Financial/social support
  • Contact tracers as care providers
  • Language/resources

https://tcf.org/content/report/racism-inequality-health-care-african-americans/?agreed=1
Longer term goals

- Just immigration policies
- Financial support
- Paid sick leave
- Comprehensive health care not tied to employment
- Housing support
- Community buy in to build trust
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