

**CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA  
EXECUTIVE ORDER  
EO-01-20**

**WHEREAS**, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (the “Nation”) since time immemorial has exercised the sovereign rights of self-government on behalf of the Choctaw people;

**WHEREAS**, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is a federally recognized Indian Nation with a historic and continual government to government relationship with the United States of America;

**WHEREAS**, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified the potential public health threat posed by novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as “high” both globally and in the United States and recommends social distancing to reduce exposure and slow the spread of COVID-19;

**WHEREAS**, the World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 a pandemic;

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death;

**WHEREAS**, it is caused by a new strain of coronavirus not previously identified in humans and easily spread from person to person;

**WHEREAS**, there is currently no approved vaccine or antiviral treatment for this disease;

**WHEREAS**, the CDC has declared that older adults and those with chronic medical conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes and lung disease are at a higher risk of becoming very sick from COVID-19;

**WHEREAS**, many patrons of the Nation’s facilities, including casinos and community centers, are of an age group that is high risk for fatality due to the COVID-19;

**WHEREAS**, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national health emergency in the United States as a result of the national spread of COVID-19;

**WHEREAS**, on March 15, 2020, the Governor of the State of Oklahoma declared a public health emergency in all seventy-seven counties of the State of Oklahoma, including those ten and one-half counties of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma;

**WHEREAS**, as of March 16, 2020, ten cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in the State of Oklahoma, while Texas and Arkansas have confirmed seventy-six and twenty-two cases of COVID-19, respectively;

**WHEREAS**, on March 16, 2020, the National Indian Gaming Commission wrote a letter to all tribal government leaders, as the best first line of defense, imploring them to take necessary steps to protect the public amid the pending COVID-19 crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, immediate attention is required to protect public health, ensure public safety and render emergency relief.

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, Gary Batton, Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, acting under the civil authority and power vested in me under the Constitution of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma do hereby declare the following:

1. The aforementioned conditions constitute a threat to the safety and welfare of the Nation and the communities within the boundaries of the Nation's service area covering ten and one-half counties and create an emergency disaster situation.
2. The Nation is declared to be a disaster area, including but not limited to structures and roads, entitled to aid, relief and assistance and do hereby direct the implementation of the Choctaw Nation Emergency Operations Plan.
3. The Nation's facilities, including but not limited to its casinos, wellness centers, community centers, the Talihina Youth Center, gaming facilities in the Choctaw Travel Plazas, resorts, hotels and other lodging, museums, daycares, and the District are temporarily deemed to be areas which pose a legitimate public safety threat and highly dangerous in light of the COVID-19 outbreak which is a life-threatening disease and thus, temporarily, cannot be used for their intended purposes.
4. COVID-19 has caused direct physical loss and damage to the casinos, hotels, resorts and other facilities of the Nation and because of COVID-19, access to the casinos, hotels, resorts and other facilities of the Nation is strictly prohibited except for mitigation and critical purposes.
5. Because of the aforementioned conditions, the following closings, postponements and cancellations of the Nation's facilities and activities are hereby directed:
  - a. Personnel at Headquarters will be limited by Executive Directors to essential personnel and every employee that can effectively work from home should do so with approval from their Executive Director.
  - b. All Dental and Optometry appointments will be postponed effective March 23, 2020 until further notice.
  - c. All elective surgeries will be postponed effective March 18, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. until further notice.
  - d. All Wellness Centers, including the fitness center located within the Diabetes Wellness Clinic will close at 5:00 p.m. on March 17, 2020.
  - e. All daycare centers of the Nation will close at 5:00 p.m. on March 20, 2020 until further notice.
  - f. Choctaw Nation Head Starts and the Jones Academy will follow Oklahoma State Department of Education closures.
  - g. Community Centers will be closed for all public gatherings, but open to individuals for emergency services only until further notice.
  - h. Senior Nutrition at the Community Centers will be curbside pick-up only effective March 18, 2020 until further notice.
  - i. Community Health Fairs have been postponed until further notice.
  - j. All tribal public events are canceled or postponed until further notice.
  - k. The Talihina Youth Center will be temporarily closed until further notice.
  - l. Effective March 18, 2020, all Food Distribution centers are limited to pick-up service only, with each Tribal member limited to two pick-ups per month. Tribal members are asked to call ahead to schedule curbside pick-up. Contact numbers are as follows:
    - i. Antlers - (580) 298-6443
    - ii. Broken Bow - (580) 584-2842
    - iii. Durant - (580) 924-7773
    - iv. McAlester - (918) 420-5716
    - v. Poteau - (918) 649-0431

- m. All Choctaw casinos, resorts, hotels and other lodging and related amenities—Durant, Grant, Pocola, McAlester, Broken Bow, Idabel and Stringtown—are closed effective 11:59 p.m. on March 16, 2020 until further notice.
  - n. Casino events and promotions are temporarily suspended until further notice.
  - o. The District venues and related events and activities are closed effective March 17, 2020 until further notice. This includes the movie theater, bowling and arcade.
  - p. All gaming inside Choctaw Toos, adjacent to Choctaw Travel Plazas, is temporarily suspended until further notice.
  - q. All dining areas in all Choctaw Travel Plazas are closed but guests may still purchase gasoline and other items inside Travel Plaza stores until further notice.
  - r. All dining areas in the Country Markets are closed but the grocery areas remain open until further notice.
  - s. Roots Café and Chili's Restaurants are now closed to the public and will not offer dine-in options, only to-go items until further notice.
  - t. Numerous Nation sponsored trainings, cultural and community programs and events are canceled until further notice.
  - u. Conscious Discipline has been postponed until further notice.
  - v. All museums and giftshops of the Nation will be closed effective March 18, 2020 until further notice.
  - w. The Welcome Centers used by guests at the Choctaw Nation's casinos, resorts and hotels will be closed until further notice.
6. This Executive Order shall remain effective until further notice.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand to this instrument on this sixteenth day of March in the year of our Lord, two thousand twenty, at Durant, Oklahoma.



Gary Batton, Chief  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma