

College of Medicine COVID-19 Relief

By: Agnes Attakai



Aaron Bia (Diné), M.D. candidate class of 2021 and Thomasina Blackwater (Diné), MPH, M.D. candidate, class of 2021 from the University of Arizona College of Medicine-Tucson (UACOM-T) along with fellow medical students in the Association of Native American Medical Students, Rural Health Professions Program (RHPP) and the Commitment to Underserved People Program led volunteer efforts to fundraise and donate supplies to the Navajo and Tohono O’odham Nation, two tribal nations impacted by the coronavirus.

In April 2020, the group raised \$1,366 in monetary donations to purchase and deliver cleaning supplies and food to the Tohono O’odham Nation. In May, the students raised \$1,900 to purchase sewing supplies and personal protective equipment to aid fellow UACOM-T alumni that work in rural Navajo hospitals in Fort Defiance, AZ, Tuba City, AZ, and Gallup, NM. In collaboration with the Western Navajo Seamstress COVID-19 Dóóda, students received fabric donations to make reusable medical gowns, scrub caps, and face masks that will be distributed to healthcare workers on the Navajo Nation. Fourth year medical student Thomasina Blackwater states that, “Many of these impacted communities on the Navajo Nation are RHPP sites where we had the privilege of doing some of our clinical rotations and are also home to some of our fellow classmates including myself.”



To see more photos visit:
<https://tinyurl.com/ISMedArticle>

Top Left: Thomasina Blackwater (far right) and peers with handsewn masks made from donated material

Top Right: Preparing to deliver donation to the Navajo Nation

Second from Top Right: Team of Volunteers

Second from Bottom Right: Aaron Bia with seamstress Theresa Hatathlie

Bottom Right: A sign on the Navajo Nation