



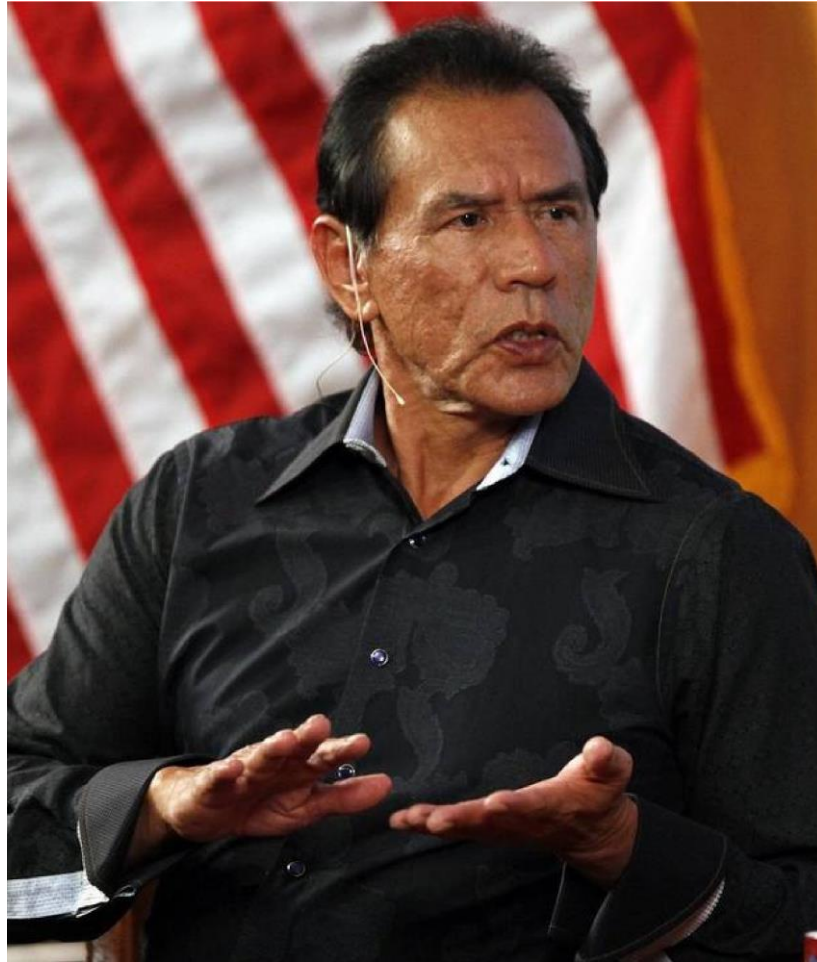
NewsOK: Oklahoma City News, Sports, Weather & Entertainment

Video: Wes Studi PSA brings attention to the toll of coronavirus on Native American communities



by **BRANDY MCDONNELL**

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Actor Wes Studi speaks at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City, Monday, June 11, 2012. [Nate Billings/The Oklahoman Archives]

Academy Award-honored actor, Oklahoma native and Native American icon Wes Studi stars in a public service announcement that's calling attention to the serious effects of the coronavirus pandemic on Native American communities.

In the PSA, Studi asks people to put their support behind the [Partnership With Native Americans](#) (PWNA) to ensure Native Americans are not left behind during the pandemic.



Many tribes have instated strict shelter-in-place orders to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. The risk of contracting the virus is higher among Native Americans due to overcrowded housing and high rates of diabetes, kidney disease and asthma. And despite more than 7,100 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the Navajo Nation and other tribal communities, federal aid has been slow to arrive, according to a news release.

In his new PSA, the Cherokee actor, activist and musician reminds the public of the need for immediate attention and charitable donations to PWNA, which has secured tribal clearances and follows CDC and tribal guidelines to continue delivering critical items, such as food, water, sanitizer and personal protective equipment (PPE), according to the news release.

"Every day, remote reservation communities face shortages of food, water and healthcare, and COVID-19 has magnified that reality," said Joshua Arce, PWNA president and CEO, in a statement. "Donations are critical now as we bring relief to under-resourced communities."



Studi also has released 30-second and 60-second PSAs aimed at Native Americans and advising them on how to protect themselves from COVID-19.

It's not Studi's first partnership with PWNA: In 2019, they collaborated in a five-part "[Realities Video Series with Wes Studi](#)," which portrays reservation life and dispels long-held myths that continue to impact Native communities today.

For more information, go to [NativePartnership.org/COVIDrelief](#) and share on social media using #NativeHope and #COVID19. People can also [donate online](#) or call 800-416-8102 to learn more.

[As previously reported](#), Studi last year received an Honorary Academy Award. He is believed to be the first Native American man as well as the first Native American actor or actress to receive an Academy Award. (Cree musician Buffy Sainte-Marie, who was born in Canada, won an Oscar in 1982 for co-writing the music to best song winner "Up Where We Belong" from the movie "An Officer and a Gentleman.")



A 2003 inductee into the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum's Hall of Great Western Performers, Studi has been part of a number of Oscar-nominated and winning films, including "Dances with Wolves," "The Last of the Mohicans," "The New World," and "Geronimo: An American Legend." Born in Nofire Hollow, near Tahlequah, he is widely considered a trailblazer who helped expand Native American representation in film.

Studi has played memorable roles as a police detective in the crime thriller "Heat," a superhero trainer in the comedy "Mystery Men" and as the protective patriarch of the alien tribe the Na'vi in the blockbuster sci-fi epic "Avatar." Still, the Cherokee actor is best known for his work in Westerns, including the title role in "Geronimo: An American Legend," as a tough Pawnee warrior in "Dances With Wolves" and, more recently, as a dying Cheyenne chief in "Hostiles."

-BAM



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Brandy McDonnell, also known by her initials BAM, writes stories and reviews on movies, music, the arts and other aspects of entertainment. She is NewsOK's top blogger: Her 4-year-old entertainment news blog, BAM's Blog, has notched more than 1... [Read more >](#)