

September 30, 2016

Dear Tribal Leader:

We are writing to ask for your input on the draft National Tribal Behavioral Health Agenda (TBHA). The TBHA was developed through a series of discussions with tribal leaders, tribal administrators, and other representatives from tribal communities who contributed to the identification of foundational elements, priorities, and strategies for improving behavioral health. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Indian Health Service (IHS) led development of the TBHA with the support of the National Indian Health Board. The draft TBHA is a blueprint for strengthening policies, programs, and activities through collaboration among federal, tribal, and other partners.

The concept for a national TBHA began through discussions with tribal leaders on SAMHSA's Tribal Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), which shared the impact that mental and substance use disorders was having on tribal communities and the importance of federal and tribal partners working differently together to make a difference. The concept for the TBHA was shared with tribal leaders on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee, the IHS National Tribal Advisory Committee, Board of Directors of the National Indian Health Board, and during many meetings, such as the HHS Annual Tribal Budget Consultation Session and sessions at national and regional tribal conferences.

Input from tribal leaders, tribal administrators, and tribal representatives over the course of approximately 18 months was used in framing elements that were viewed as foundational for improving the behavioral health of tribal communities as well as developing cross-cutting considerations, priorities, and strategies. The draft TBHA also includes an American Indian and Alaska Native Cultural Wisdom Declaration to ensure that tribal wisdom and traditional practices are fundamental to efforts focused on improving the behavioral health and overall wellness of Native peoples.

Your input on the draft TBHA is requested during the comment period, which closes on October 30, 2016. To obtain an electronic copy of the draft TBHA and/or provide comments online, please go to <http://store.samhsa.gov/TBHA/feedback/>. Written comments, using the same format as the online form, may also be submitted via e-mail to tribalconsultation@samhsa.hhs.gov. All comments must be received by October 30, 2016.

Should you have questions, please contact Sheila Cooper at sheila.cooper@samhsa.hhs.gov or at 240-276-2005. We look forward to working with you to improve the behavioral health of American Indian and Alaska Native people and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kana Enomoto', with a horizontal line extending to the right and a vertical line at the end.

Kana Enomoto
Principal Deputy Administrator

Enclosures:

Draft Tribal Behavioral Health Agenda
Copy of the Draft TBHA Online Submission Form