



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

JOIN US AT THE NATIONAL TRIBAL LEADERS FORUM ON MARCH 11-12, 2015 IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA TO DETERMINE THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF A TPHI! **REGISTER NOW!**

WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEALTH?

Public health is more than preventing disease and promoting health. According to the World Health Organization, public health activities aim to provide conditions in which people can be healthy and focuses on the entire community, rather than individuals. Tribal public health is also concerned with how Tribal governments and administrations work with other key stakeholders (such as Indian Health Service, state and local governments and others) to ensure healthy conditions for their communities, rather than solely focusing on how to eliminate a particular disease.

WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE (PHI)?

Public health institutes (PHIs) are non-profit, non-governmental organizations that improve the public's health by fostering innovation, leveraging resources, and building partnerships across sectors. PHIs are often charged with:

- Engaging strategic partners to address gaps in existing systems;
- Acting in the best interest of those they serve and adapting quickly to changing health priorities;
- Training the workforce and developing leadership and management; and
- Serving as a neutral convener of multiple stakeholders to identify solutions to shared concerns.

The international field of public health recognizes the critical importance of strengthening public health systems and PHIs are being looked at as important partners to achieve health improvement goals.

WHY DO WE NEED A TRIBAL PHI?

Disproportionately high rates of chronic diseases, such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes, exist among many AI/AN peoples compared to all races. Greater investments are needed to build Tribal public health infrastructure and capacities to improve health outcomes. Based on outcomes from a comprehensive needs and assets assessment, including regional and national Tribal Leader Roundtables, a TPHI could provide support in the following ways:

- Serve as a trusted source of resource information and research for Tribal Leaders, decision makers and administrators;

Leadership and guidance from Tribes and Tribally Led Organizations will be essential to a TPHI's creation and sustainability.

- Build public health capacity at the Tribal and regional levels to deliver the 10 Essential Public Health Services;
- Provide Nation Building through executive leadership training, public health law and policy development, workforce development and peer networks; and
- Liaise with federal agencies, foundations and other public health entities, complementing the work of existing Tribal organizations and advocating for greater public health equity.

WHAT WILL A TPHI PROVIDE THAT ISN'T ALREADY PROVIDED BY OTHER TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS?

The primary focus of a TPHI would be to provide responsive and appropriate coordination at the national level to help bridge the gaps in existing Tribal public health systems, while respecting the roles of Tribal partners and the services they provide. The efforts of a TPHI would result in innovative, dynamic, sustainable, and culturally competent practices that improve performance, increase effectiveness, and achieve results. A TPHI's role would be to serve as a neutral source of reliable data and expertise to strengthen and complement current efforts.

Findings from a comprehensive 'Needs and Assets' assessment of the national Tribal public health system indicate that there are opportunities to build Tribal governance and administrative capacity in the areas of public health law and policy, emergency response, public health performance; health information systems and resource development. While some regional and national Tribally Led Organizations may have projects in these areas; no single Tribal entity has a primary function to build Tribal public health infrastructure; collect, analyze and disseminate information and insights; leadership training, workforce development and peer networks; or conduct research and development to strengthen Tribal health department performance nationally in public health.

WHY IS A NATIONAL TRIBAL LEADERS FORUM BEING HELD AND WHY SHOULD I ATTEND?

Tribal leader attendance at the forum will be critical to development of a TPHI that will address the health needs and assets of AI/AN communities. At the forum, Tribes will learn more about how a TPHI could support Tribes to more effectively and efficiently address public health concerns in their community.



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Tribal stakeholders will participate in strategic conversation to create a shared vision and develop recommendations about future directions; determine imperatives for change; and foster new and improved relationships to facilitate growth and future action to best meet community needs and build on assets. The result of the Tribal Leaders Forum will be a “blueprint” report summarizing Tribal Leader recommendations for the development of a TPHI.

HOW WILL ALL THE INFORMATION LEARNED BE SHARED?

The result of the Tribal Leaders Forum will be a “blueprint” report summarizing Tribal Leader recommendations for the development of a TPHI. Our goal is to develop a blueprint that will be used as a guide to create a TPHI and provide information about its structure. The blueprint will be disseminated nationally.

HOW WILL A TPHI BE FUNDED? HOW WILL A TPHI BE SUSTAINED AND AVOID COMPETITION FOR LIMITED FUNDING?

PHIs typically operate from a number of funding sources that are often different from those they serve. Findings from phase I show that the majority of Tribal Organizations operate primarily from federal funding that is Tribally designated. A TPHI would diversify funding sources contributing the Tribal public health by seeking funding from foundations, corporate giving, and other public and private sources.

HOW WILL A TPHI ADDRESS THE HEALTH NEEDS OF THE URBAN INDIAN COMMUNITY?

A TPHI could potentially serve any type of organization whose primary mission is to address the health of American Indian

and Alaska Native health. It will be important for a TPHI to serve as a neutral source of reliable data and expertise to strengthen and complement efforts currently provided by organizations serving urban Indian health programs.

WHY IS THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT?

PHIs have the ability to leverage and conduct research on what works to improve health, advance smarter laws and policies and strengthen public health departments – all components of what it takes to build a culture of health. RWJF is committed to realizing this bold transformation through the pursuit of solutions that are evidence-based, measurable, and equitable. RWJF sees potential in a TPHI as a new entity to address the ongoing challenges in Tribal health communities, including increase efficiency with limited resources, advance capacity, complement existing activities and employ best practices, and as one way to build and restore a culture of health in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. This project is not a RWJF project – this is a project for and by Tribal Nations. With guidance from Tribal leaders and other key stakeholders, we can ensure that the findings are relevant and useful, and can support any future decisions about a TPHI.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Visit the TPHI website at www.redstar1.org/tphifeasibility for general project information, to view webinars, receive newsletters, and register for the National Tribal Leaders Forum.

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