Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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A meeting of area directors of the two principal federal agencies providing services to American Indians and Alaska Natives will take place October 19-20 at the Sheraton Premiere Hotel in Tysons Corner, Virginia. "This first-ever meeting between the Area and Associate Directors of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in the Department of the Interior and the Indian Health Service (IHS) in the Department of Health and Human Services will be devoted to the development of a national strategy for alcohol and substance abuse prevention on Indian reservations," Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Eddie F. Brown said. Dr. Everett H. Rhoades, Director of the Indian Health Service, said the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) during the conference will insure shared cooperation and coordination efforts between the two agencies. "We hope to identify mutual concerns and interests for the prevention of alcohol and substance abuse among American Indian and Alaska Natives and develop a strategy for implementing the MOA in each of the areas," Dr. Rhoades said.

The MOA will be signed in a 10:15 a.m. ceremony, Tuesday, October 20 before an overview of the meeting and closing is given by Dr. Rhoades and BIA Deputy Commissioner David J. Matheson. Each of the directors of the two federal agencies will have met with their counterparts prior to the two-day summit meeting to discuss and share preliminary ideas regarding the implementation of the MOA. The meeting will be used to finalize those plans and come to a consensus to carry out the prevention program throughout Indian Country. The Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act directs the two Bureaus to work together -- BIA in prevention and IHS in treatment. An earlier MOA between the two laid the groundwork for the prevention .and treatment programs and the new MOA signing signals the beginning of the implementation programs.