Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – As part of President Obama's Generation Indigenous ("Gen-I") initiative to remove barriers to success for Native American youth, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Lawrence S. Roberts today announced that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) joined with their federal partners last month to launch the Culture and Meth Don't Mix program, a multi-agency methamphetamine ("meth") prevention initiative for Native youth.

The program is the result of collaboration under the Gen-I initiative between the White House Council on Native American Affairs, which is chaired by Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, the BIA's Office of Justice Services, BIE, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its aim is to be a culturally appropriate approach for meth prevention among Native American youth through community and interagency involvement. The program also reflects the Interior Department's intent to uphold the United States' trust responsibility to the federally recognized tribes.

"Through the Generation Indigenous initiative, the Obama Administration has sought to utilize federal resources across the board to address the issues that can prevent Native youth from fulfilling their potential," Roberts said. "The Culture and Meth Don't Mix program's goal is to strengthen meth prevention in tribal communities through the combined efforts of the BIA's Office of Justice Services, BIE schools, and SAMHSA. I want to thank SAMHSA for working with us to help tribes with protecting their children and youth, and tribal leaders for participating in this important effort."

The program was initially rolled out in December 2016 with Indian Affairs, BIA and BIE officials and leaders from seven tribes: The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota, the White Earth Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe in Montana, and the Penobscot Nation and the Passamaquoddy Tribe's Pleasant Point and Indian Township communities in Maine.

The program also includes a speaker series to be held in selected BIE schools that will discuss the implications and health issues involved with methamphetamine use. Speakers will include BIA law enforcement officials who will explain the legal implications of meth use, a SAMHSA-recommended health professional to describe how meth affects personal health, and a representative from the tribal community to address meth's impact on it culture and people.

The Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs supports the Secretary of the Interior in carrying out the Department's responsibilities to the federally recognized tribes through BIA and BIE programs and services. The BIA's mission includes maintaining and improving public safety and justice in tribal communities through the Office of Justice Services. Visit Office of Justice Services for more information on OJS's mission and programs.

The BIE implements federal Indian education programs and funds 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools (of which two-thirds are tribally operated) located on 64 reservations in 23 states and peripheral dormitories serving over 40,000 students. The BIE also operates two post-secondary

schools, and administers grants for 28 tribally controlled colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges, and provides higher education scholarships to Native youth. For more information, visit www.bie.edu.

SAMHSA is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. For more information on SAMHSA's tribal affairs efforts, visit http://www.samhsa.gov/tribal-affairs.

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