Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Native American youth will benefit from the services

Media Contact: Indian Health Service (301) 443-3593, newsroom@ihs.gov // DOI-Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs (202) 219-4152, Nedra Darling
For Immediate Release: December 7, 2016
Print PDF

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Servicesâ□□ Indian Health Service (IHS) and the U.S. Department of the Interiorâ□□s Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) entered into an Interagency Agreement today that will increase access to mental and behavioral health services for students attending BIE schools and youth detained in BIA Office of Justice Services (OJS) facilities.

â□□The Indian Health Service is dedicated to addressing behavioral health issues across Indian Country with a special focus on Native youth,â□□ said IHS Principal Deputy Director Mary L. Smith. â□□This Agreement is another major step we have taken to increase access to quality health care in tribal communities. This is a great partnership and key to caring for our Native youth.â□□

â□□In keeping with President Obamaâ□□s Generation Indigenous initiative to improve opportunities for Native youth and the BIAâ□□s *Tiwahe* initiative to strengthen Native families, this interagency agreement will enable the BIA and BIE to work collaboratively with IHS to bring much-needed behavioral health resources to Native youth,â□□ said Lawrence S. â□□Larryâ□□ Roberts, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior. â□□I want to thank IHS for working with us to bring these resources to our educational and juvenile detention facilities. The services will be of immense help to our students and youth detainees and their families.â□□

The Agreements allows each agency to establish local partnerships through Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) between IHS federally operated mental health programs, BIE-operatedÂ elementary and secondary schools and BIA OJS-operated juvenile detention centers to provide mental health assessment and counseling services, which includes telebehavioral health services. In the first year of this agreement, more than 25 schools could access these services.

Under this 10-year Agreement, behavioral health services will be offered at BIE schools and OJS facilities. Tribes, tribally controlled schools or detention facilities may enter into a MOA with the three agencies for these services; however, tribal participation is completely voluntary.

A similar partnership already exists with the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Since November 2015, nine schools and one detention center on the Pine Ridge Reservation initiated agreements for behavioral health services. This Agreement builds on the other interagency efforts between IHS and BIA, including a December 2015 partnership to equip BIA law enforcement officers with naloxone for responding to drug overdoses in tribal communities.

Launched by President Obama in December 2014, Generation Indigenous, also known as Gen-I, is a Native youth initiative focused on removing the barriers that stand between Native youth and their opportunities to succeed. This initiative takes a comprehensive, culturally appropriate approach to help

improve the lives and opportunities for Native youth. Earlier this year, IHS announced more than $7 million in Generation Indigenous behavioral health funding for Tribes, Tribal organizations and other programs.

About the BIA and BIE:

The Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary â Indian Affairs oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which is headed by a director responsible for managing day-to-day operations through four offices â Indian Services, Justice Services, Trust Services, and Field Operations. These offices directly administer or fund tribally based infrastructure, economic development, law enforcement and justice, social services (including child welfare), tribal governance, and trust land and natural and energy resources management programs for the nationâs federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

The PDAS also oversees the Bureau of Indian Education, whose director implements federal Indian education programs and funding for 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools (of which two-thirds are tribally operated) on 64 reservations in 23 states, as well as peripheral dormitories, serving over 40,000 students. The BIE also operates two post-secondary institutions of higher learning, administers grants for 28 tribally controlled colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges, and provides higher education scholarships for Native youth. For information about BIA programs, visit www.indianaffairs.gov. For information about BIE programs, visit www.bie.edu.

About the Indian Health Service:

The IHS, an agency in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. For more information, visit http://www.ihs.gov. Follow IHS on Facebook.

---

https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/opa/online-press-release/indian-health-service-partners-bureau-indian-affairs-and-bureau