Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: November 12, 2010
Print PDF

The Indian Health Service and the Department of the Interior will hold ten tribal listening sessions across Indian Country to seek input on how the agencies can most effectively work within American Indian and Alaska Native communities to prevent suicide. American Indians and Alaska Natives have a suicide rate 72 percent higher than the general U.S. population.

“We are very concerned by the ongoing tragedy of suicide in Indian Country,” said IHS Director Yvette Roubideaux, M.D., M.P.H. “We know the consequences of suicide are devastating to our families and tribal communities.”

“We have heard the pleas of tribal leaders for coordinated prevention and intervention efforts to address these tragic events, particularly among our youth,” said DOI Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk.

“These listening sessions will help us better support tribal communities working to enhance the way young people feel connected to community and family and strengthening their ability to accept the challenges and gifts that life has to offer,” said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde.

The tribal listening sessions (see list below) are being held in conjunction with a national comprehensive suicide prevention conference planned for early next year. The conference will provide an opportunity for the Department of the Interior, Department of Health and Human Services, and tribal leaders to develop strategies and best practices for suicide prevention and intervention in Indian Country. The listening sessions will help the agencies gather first-hand information on suicide prevention needs, concerns, programs, and practices from the residents of American Indian and Alaska Native communities. This input will shape the agenda and goals for the conference.

Tribal collaboration is a vital part of efforts to reduce health disparities and raise the health status of American Indian and Alaska Native people. Listening sessions are an important part of the open and continuous dialogue that promotes and strengthens tribal-federal partnerships.

Suicide Prevention Listening Sessions – to be held at 1 - 5 pm local time

Navajo Region - November 15, 2010

Navajo Nation Museum Highway 264 and Loop Road Window Rock, AZ 86515

Midwest Region - November 19, 2010

Mystic Lake Casino Hotel Wabasha Meeting Room 2400 Mystic Lake Blvd. Prior Lake, MN 55372

Rocky Mountain Region - November 23, 2010

Hampton Inn and Suites 3550 Ember Lane Billings, MT 59102

Alaska Region November 30, 2010

Egan Convention Center 555 West 5th Avenue Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Great Plains Region December 2, 2010

Best Western Ramkota Hotel & Convention Center 2111 N. LaCrosse Street Rapid City, SD 57701

Southern Plains/Eastern Oklahoma Regions - December 13, 2010

Embassy Suites – Meridian Eastern Oklahoma 1815 South Meridian Oklahoma City, OK 73108

Pacific Region December 21, 2010

Federal Building -- Cottage Conference Room 2800 Cottage Way Sacramento, CA 95825

Southwest Region January 10, 2011

National Indian Programs Training Center (NIPTC) 1011 Indian School Road, NW Albuquerque, NM 87104

Northwest Region January 12, 2011

Bureau of Indian Affairs 911 Federal Building – Auditorium 911 NE 11th Avenue Portland, OR 97232

Eastern Region February 10, 2011

USET Conference Marriott Crystal Gateway 1700 Jefferson Davis Highway Arlington, VA 22202

NOTICE TO EDITORS: For additional information on this subject, please contact the IHS public affairs office at 301-443-3593. Additional information about the IHS is available on the IHS website at http://www.ihs.gov

---