



Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

5600 Fishers Lane • Rockville, MD 20857
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MAY 31 2018

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is committed to working with you to address the opioid epidemic and other behavioral health issues affecting your community. Tribes have shared that opioid use disorders and deaths compound, and further strain, efforts to address other substance use issues that their communities face. Based on this input, SAMHSA worked to expand the behavioral health discretionary grant programs that tribes, tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations are eligible for; enhanced the flexibility of grant programs to ensure they meet the needs of tribal communities; and, increased the level of funding for which tribal entities can apply.

Recent discussions with tribal leaders underscored the differing levels of need for behavioral health prevention, treatment, and/or recovery support; continued support for improving integration of behavioral health and primary care; greater access to behavioral health workforce development and training resources; and, improved services for people with substance use disorders who have housing needs. SAMHSA was specifically asked to work with the Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to improve the availability of behavioral health providers in Indian Country.

In response to tribal requests, SAMHSA is hosting a Listening Session at the National Congress of American Indians 2018 Mid Year Conference and Marketplace on Sunday, June 3, from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The information gained from this Listening Session will inform planning for future funding and technical assistance efforts. We invite you to attend the Listening Session, or submit comments to otap@samhsa.hhs.gov. Should you have questions, please feel free to contact Mirtha Beadle, Director, Office of Tribal Affairs and Policy at mirtha.beadle@samhsa.hhs.gov or 240-276-0641.

Sincerely,

Elinore F. McCance-Katz, M.D., Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use