

HRSA and American Indians and Alaska Natives

Community Health Centers:

Health Center Program - funds community-based and patient-directed organizations that serve populations with limited access to health care. The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Bureau of Primary Health Care Health Center Program grantees served over **260,000** American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN), according to the 2012 Uniform Data System.

The Affordable Care Act provides \$11 billion in funding for the operation, expansion, and construction of health centers throughout the nation. In fiscal year (FY) 2012, HRSA awarded over \$59 million to 26 dually-funded health centers. Recent investments in FY 2013 include the following:

- In January 2013, HRSA announced the new competitive Health Center New Access Point competition. An estimated \$19 million will be awarded to establish approximately 25 new health center access points. These grants will support new full-time service delivery sites for the provision of comprehensive primary and preventive health care services. Tribal entities were eligible to apply for this funding opportunity. HRSA anticipates announcing these awards in September 2013.
- In early July 2013, HRSA awarded approximately \$150 million in supplemental funding to 1,159 health centers, including Tribal entities. This funding expands current outreach and enrollment assistance activities, and facilitates enrollment of eligible health center patients and service area residents into affordable health insurance coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplaces, Medicaid, or the Children's Health Insurance Programs. With this funding, health centers expect to hire additional outreach and eligibility assistance workers to assist millions of people nationwide with enrollment into affordable health insurance coverage. A total of 25 Tribal /Urban Indian health centers received funds that total more than \$2.2 million to assist individuals in their communities in becoming enrolled.

National Health Service Corps:

The Indian Health Service (IHS) and HRSA continue to work together to increase utilization and availability of the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Program as a recruitment tool to fill health professional vacancies at IHS sites. Currently, the NHSC is supporting 311 clinicians serving in Tribal facilities. In addition, 114 NHSC clinicians identified themselves as AI/AN.

As of the end of June 2013, 610 Tribal clinical sites were eligible to offer loan repayment to eligible clinicians practicing at these sites. That compares to 494 such sites approved as of 2011 and 60 at the end of 2010. The Affordable Care Act permits Indian health facilities that serve only Tribal members to qualify as NHSC sites, extending the ability of IHS/Tribal facilities to recruit and retain primary care providers by utilizing NHSC scholarship and loan repayment incentives. There are a total of 610 IHS, Tribal Clinics, and Urban Indian Health Clinics approved as NHSC sites and 147 open positions at these sites listed in the NHSC Jobs Center. The link to the NHSC Jobs Center is <http://nhscjobs.hrsa.gov/external/search/index.seam>.

Healthy Weight Collaborative:

The Tribal Healthy Living Workgroup was started in the fall of 2012 as an opportunity for Tribes to share their work in obesity prevention and healthy living, to create opportunities to collaborate, as well as learn from other Tribal communities. The creation of the workgroup by HRSA was an outcome of the agency's Healthy Weight Collaborative (HWC). The HWC was an Affordable Care Act Prevention and Public Health Fund project to share and spread nationally, evidence-based and promising interventions to prevent and treat obesity for children and families. Approximately 50 teams participated in the HWC, which ended formally in March 2013. One of these teams, the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, North Dakota, expressed interest in working with other Tribal programs and groups throughout the country to share their story and learn from each other. As a result, the Tribal Healthy Living Workgroup was formed to help facilitate this collaboration.

A key component of the Tribal Healthy Living Workgroup is for it to be led by Tribes, with support, as requested, from involved federal staff. To meet this goal, the Tribal Healthy Living Advisory Planning Committee is responsible for all key decisions related to the structure of the workgroup, such as: defining the mission and goals; determining outreach strategies; setting meeting dates and agendas; and coordinating with federal staff regarding requested support of workgroup goals.

The workgroup's last meeting was held on June 27, 2013. The agenda for this meeting included presentations on 1) the IHS Healthy Weight for Life Initiative and, 2) the National Institute of Health's Division of Nutrition Research Coordination.

Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program:

The Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, in partnership with HRSA, administers the Tribal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, which has awarded 25 grants, in 3 cohorts, totaling \$21 million to Tribes (including consortia of Tribes), Tribal Organizations, and Urban Indian Organizations since fiscal year 2010. These funds support grants (cooperative agreements) to Tribal entities to conduct community needs and readiness assessments; develop the infrastructure needed for the widespread planning, adopting, implementing, and sustaining of evidence-based MIECHV programs; implement high-quality, culturally relevant, evidence-based home visiting programs for pregnant women, expectant fathers, and parents and primary caregivers with young children aged birth to kindergarten entry; measure program participants' progress toward meeting legislatively mandated benchmarks; and conduct a rigorous evaluation of the implemented home visiting program.

Technical Assistance Outreach Initiative:

HRSA is now emailing its targeted funding opportunity announcements (FOA) to over 400 Tribes and 140 Tribal-related entities each time there is a posting to HRSA's website. Information is being solicited from remaining Tribes so that they too can receive these communications regularly. HRSA has worked with IHS to insert the HHS link to its website which will provide information for all FOA's posted on the HRSA website. HRSA has been working to improve access to all grant opportunities where Tribes and Tribal entities are eligible. Some examples include the following:

- Focusing on each aspect of the grant lifecycle and providing targeted technical assistance to Tribes;
- Flagging Tribes as eligible entities in HRSA FOA's;
- Offering cultural sensitivity training to all HRSA staff on working effectively with Tribes and Tribal governments;
- Conducting live webinars online on how to find HHS grant opportunities for Tribes and highlighting the grants forecast and Grants.gov to locate grants for Tribes;
- Increased the number of Tribal grant reviewers in the agency's database from 153 in August 2010 to 250 as of May 2013;
- On June 22, 2013, HRSA mailed a letter signed by Dr. Wakefield to 156 Tribal entities asking for their email address to be included on the agency's listserv, which includes over 400 Tribal entities;
- HRSA is planning a 1-hour webcast titled, "***HRSA's Technical Assistance Website: An Introduction for Tribal Entities.***" It will take place on August 15, 2013, and targets federally recognized Tribes and other Tribal entities. The objective is to inform Tribal populations about HRSA and its funding opportunities, as well as introduce them to our current technical assistance (TA) website and available resources to help them successfully apply for grant funding assistance. The presentation will feature Dr. Wakefield, followed by a panel of staff experts that highlight key features of the website. A question and answer period will follow the presentation. The TA website can be accessed at the following address:
<http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/index.html>

Facilitating Communication:

HRSA is committed to improving communication with IHS and other AI/AN stakeholders.

- Dear Tribal Leader Letters to provide Tribal leaders updates on HRSA activities.
- Periodic meetings held with IHS, the National Indian Health Board, National Congress of American Indians, and the National Council of Urban Indian Health.

- HRSA has a Tribal and Urban Indian specific email box, aianhealth@hrsa.gov to provide a dedicated venue for Tribal correspondence.

Key Resources:

- HRSA's website dedicated to AI/AN health: <http://www.hrsa.gov> and <http://www.hrsa.gov/publichealth/community/indianhealth/>
- Find a Health Center, <http://www.findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/> (HRSA has worked with IHS to post the "Find a Health Center" widget on the IHS website to make it easier to find IHS clinics in your community).
- For HRSA Grants go to: <http://www.grants.gov/> and <http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/index.html> (Grants.gov is your source to FIND and APPLY for federal grants).
- For more information on the Affordable Care Act and its support for Indian Country, visit <http://www.healthcare.gov/> (Materials related to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, including regulations, grants, authorities, and requests for public comment).