



National Indian Health Board

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Exploring Tribal Public Health Accreditation

The Tribal Public Health Accreditation (TPHA) Advisory Board recently completed a formal Call for Input from Tribal leaders and public health professionals across Indian Country to assist in the development of draft national public health accreditation standards, under a national initiative led by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB).

As part of the NIHB's Tribal Public Health Accreditation project, the Call for Input served to inform the feasibility of promoting voluntary public health accreditation in Indian country. NIHB has held a number of Tribal Input Sessions on tribal public health accreditation since May 2008.

The following is a summary of input provided to-date:

- Significant enthusiasm was expressed for public health accreditation in Indian Country
- Accreditation is consistent with the Native vision of healthy communities and improving health broadly
- PHAB recognizes the diversity of public health service delivery in Indian Country
- Key challenges and barriers to public health accreditation exist in Indian Country
- There is high interest in reviewing standards and measures for their applicability to tribes
- Interest in Beta testing accreditation process was expressed by tribal communities
- Great importance is placed on PHAB listening to tribal input and adapting process to unique needs

The Advisory Board met in June and reviewed the final results from the Call for Input and developed recommendations to PHAB to adapt the draft national standards for tribal public health settings.

On July 16, 2009 during a PHAB Board meeting in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, the NIHB signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with PHAB. The overall goal of the MOU is to utilize the strengths and expertise of both organizations to ensure quality public health services and to enhance the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives

The MOU set forth the following mutual goals for NIHB and PHAB:

- Improve the quality of public health services in tribal communities.
- Promote voluntary public health accreditation in tribal communities.
- Ensure that the accreditation process and standards are relevant to tribal communities.
- Encourage tribes to successfully apply for public health accreditation.
- Encourage ongoing partnership and collaboration by NIHB and PHAB on public health accreditation efforts.

A beta-test of the public health accreditation standards are currently underway. For more information, please contact NIHB Senior Advisor, Aimee Centivany, at acentivany@nihb.org and visit the PHAB website at www.phaboard.org.