



MAY 17 2004

Dear Tribal Leaders and Community Alcohol Coordinators:

The Indian Health Service (IHS), the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), and the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration invite you to attend the first-annual international conference, "Expanding Partnerships To Meet Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Challenges in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities," June 8-10, in San Diego, California. This conference will be held in conjunction with the annual IHS Behavioral Health Conference. A copy of the flyer containing details on the joint conferences is enclosed for your information.

The focus of this international conference is to provide American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Tribes, Urban Indian health alcohol program personnel, and State alcohol and substance abuse officials with the opportunity to coordinate responses to the challenges facing AI/AN alcohol and substance abuse treatment and prevention programs.

Due to specific border concerns related to alcohol and other drug issues in AI/AN communities and on Tribal lands situated on or near the United States, Canadian, and Mexican borders, the IHS is expanding the scope of its invitation to include Tribal members who live in Canada and Mexico. In support of the recommendation made by Government representatives in October 2003 at the International Network on Indigenous Health, Knowledge, and Development Conference in Townsville, Australia, the IHS is also inviting indigenous people and Government representatives from New Zealand and Australia. The sharing and exchange of global concerns and innovative solutions to common alcohol and substance abuse problems will be highlighted during the conference. It is my hope that by working together, new strategies and partnerships will emerge to address these common alcohol and substance abuse problems.

The conference will also highlight the current challenges facing our communities, such as the rise in the use of methamphetamines and the misuse of prescription narcotics. One important goal is to bring potential Federal, State, private-sector, and international funding sources together so that our communities can better access these resources. I am pleased that CSAT, CSAP, and CMHS have committed to ensure the participation of State prevention and treatment officials from each of the 35 reservation States.

I look forward to your participation in this important conference.

Sincerely yours,

Charles W. Grim, D.D.S., M.H.S.A.
Assistant Surgeon General
Director

Enclosure