



MAY 12 2003

Indian Health Service
Rockville MD 20852

Dear Tribal and Urban Indian Leaders:

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), acting through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and combining the strengths and resources of all relevant HHS programs and agencies, including the Indian Health Service (IHS), announces the availability of fiscal year (FY) 2003 funds for a cooperative agreement program to implement the Secretary of HHS' Prevention Initiative for Americans entitled Steps to a HealthierUS (STEPS).

The STEPS program is based on the President's HealthierUS Initiative, which highlights the influence that healthy lifestyles and behaviors - such as making healthy nutritional choices, being physically active, and avoiding tobacco use and exposure - have in achieving and maintaining good health for persons of all ages.

The purpose of STEPS is to enable communities to reduce the burden of chronic disease, including: preventing diabetes among populations at highest risk (pre-diabetes), reducing undiagnosed diabetes, reducing complications of diabetes, preventing overweight and obesity, and reducing the complications of asthma. As you are all aware, Indian people suffer a death rate from diabetes that is 318 percent higher than the rate for all races combined in the United States.

Three risk factors - poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, and tobacco use and exposure - are major contributors to the Nation's leading causes of death and must be addressed as part of this initiative. By requiring recipients to address nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco use as core components of their community interventions, the STEPS program will reduce the burden of the three diseases/conditions (diabetes, asthma, and obesity) it is focused on.

Federally recognized Tribal governments, regional area Indian health boards, urban Indian organizations, and inter-Tribal councils, as designated by the principal Tribal elected official or chief executive, will serve as the lead/fiduciary agencies for Tribal applications. Each Tribal application must cover a minimum population of 10,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives within a defined geographic area or set of areas.

Tribal governments, regional area Indian health boards, urban Indian organizations, and inter-Tribal councils are eligible to apply for funds up to \$250,000; one Tribal application will be funded. Tribes or tribal consortia are encouraged to submit high-quality proposals responsive to the funding levels stipulated in this announcement. Although only one Tribal application will be funded in FY 2003, it is anticipated that approved but unfunded applications will be funded immediately upon availability of new funds in FY 2004. In other words, an additional request for applications might not be made in FY 2004, with awards relying on applications to this funding announcement.

In addition, funding levels are expected to increase in FY 2004; Tribal entities that apply during FY 2003 but who first receive funding in FY 2004 will do so at the higher funding level (\$300,000 - \$1 million per applicant depending on the size of the population reached). To receive the higher funding levels in FY 2004, Tribal entities with approved applications during this (FY 2003) process, will be asked to submit a revised work plan and budget in order to receive funds at FY 2004 funding levels during their first year of funding.

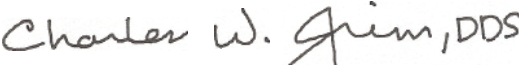
Awards will begin on or about September 22, 2003, and will be made for a 12-month budget period within a project period of up to 5 years. Continuation awards and level of funding within an approved project period (FY 2004 through FY 2007) will be based on the availability of funds and satisfactory progress in achieving performance measures as evidenced by required progress reports.

A live, interactive satellite broadcast and Webcast about the Request for Application and the STEPS program will be held on May 22, 2003, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). Information about this broadcast may be found at the CDC Web Site: www.phppo.cdc.gov/phtn. The Grants announcement will be available May 9, 2003. The request for applications and other information about the STEPS program is available at www.healthierus.gov.

A letter of intent to apply for a grant under the STEPS program must be submitted on or before June 1, 2003. If you do not have access to the Internet or have difficulty accessing the forms online, please contact the CDC Procurement and Grants Office Technical Information Management Section on (770) 488-2700. Application forms can be mailed to you. Applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. EST on July 15, 2003.

If you have questions regarding the STEPS program, please contact W. Craig Vanderwagen, M.D., (Acting) Chief Medical Officer on (301) 443-1083, or by e-mail at wvanderw@hqe.ihs.gov

Sincerely yours,


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Assistant Surgeon General
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