

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Annual Tribal Budget and Consultation Report Fiscal Year 2006

Section I - Tribal Priorities

Tribal Priority 1, Funding and Related Issues

NA

Tribal Priority 2, Increased Access to ATSDR Programs

Objective: Promote within Indian Country a better awareness of ATSDR and its programs.

Background: Often tribal governments and people are alerted to the regulatory work conducted by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and inquire from EPA answers to the public health significance of contaminants present in their environment. Both regulators and tribes are becoming more aware of ATSDR's expertise in environmental public health.

Activities: ATSDR works with the Community Tribal Subcommittee (CTS) to the Center's Board of Scientific Counselors (BSC). The CTS members include BSC members and representatives from communities and tribal peoples. The CTS advises and discusses with the agency ongoing and planned tribal initiatives. For example, the CTS has provided comments and ideas for the Center's new Environmental Justice Policy, and has integrated tribal-specific questions into the BSC's program peer review of agency-wide public health practice and research programs.

Also, Agency staff attend national meetings that focus on tribal environmental concerns (Alaska Forum on the Environment and National Tribal Environmental Council) to work collaboratively with others addressing tribal environmental public health issues.

Expected Outcomes: Increased Tribal requests for ATSDR services.

Tribal Priority 3, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Objective: Decrease or eliminate tribal communities' exposures to hazardous waste in the environment which could result in adverse health effects.

Background: Working in the field, directly with tribal governments and communities, and also using other forms of communication, the Agency strives to address issues of environmental contamination exposures. Environmental media that may be sources of exposures – air, water, soils, and traditional foods – are considered, along with tribal-specific sources, such as plants which are harvested for ceremonial and cultural purposes. Both cancer and non-cancer health outcomes may be associated with exposures to toxic chemicals. Tribal concerns are related to how much exposure is occurring and whether those exposures are potentially harmful.

Activities: Exposure evaluations, usually in the format of a Public Health Assessment or Public Health Consultation report, are completed by agency staff or by recipients of agency externally funded programs (cooperative agreements). This fiscal year, we have responded to tribal concerns of mining waste on tribal lands, contamination of traditional foods, and areas of tribal lands affected by prior industrial usage.

More rapid responses may also be provided as technical assists to the tribes. Health education is also conducted. Tribal consultation is an integral component of any product addressing tribal issues. In addition, research is ongoing to determine particular exposures and toxicities of contaminants in these tribal exposure pathways.

Expected Outcomes: An increased understanding of any potential risk of adverse health effects to tribal people due to environmental contaminant exposures and an increased promotion of healthy behaviors to reduce and/or prevent further harmful exposures.

Tribal Priority 4, Recruitment and Retention of Healthcare Providers

Objective: To increase the workforce needed to address tribal environmental public health issues.

Background: The numbers of individuals trained to conduct environmental, scientific, public health evaluations in Indian Country is severely under the needs for such public health expertise.

Activities: ATSDR has a cooperative agreement with the Gila River Indian Community funding the Tribe to hire needed personnel and we also assist with training staff to develop the environmental public health expertise to address issues of chemical exposures. Similarly, our cooperative agreement program funds a collaborative effort for the Alaska Division of Public Health and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortia to respond to environmental public health concerns of Alaska Native peoples. We also promote building the tribal environmental public health workforce through our cooperative agreements with Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). The TCU programs are developing associate degree programs in this field. And, we sponsor AISES students to work in our agency and experience the environmental public health practice to alert them to careers in this area.

Expected Outcomes: Self-governance of tribes to conduct their own environmental health assessments.

Tribal Priority 5, Emergency Preparedness

NA

Tribal Priority 6, Data and Research

Objective: Determine, reduce, and prevent adverse health effects from exposures to toxic chemicals.

Background: This research is focused on vulnerable populations, such as Native populations that consume affected biota in their traditional lifestyles. A Congressionally-mandated public health research program, the ATSDR Great Lakes Human Health Effects Research Program, is specifically studying the exposures to toxic chemicals via fish consumption in the Great Lakes.

Activities: The multi-year research program is now shifting emphasis to prevention/intervention activities. However, analyses of collected samples continue to generate data critical to understanding the ongoing exposures in the Great Lake basin. Activities include health departments, academic institutions and tribal governments in the basin.

Expected Outcomes: Changes to environmental public health policy and development of tribal-specific cultural messages and guidelines on fish consumption.

▪ **Section II - Tribal Consultation Activities**

ATSDR FY 2006 SUMMARY OF HHS CONSULTATION WITH INDIAN TRIBES

Date	Event	In Attendance	Summary
HHS Tribal Budget Consultation Session			
Regional Tribal Consultation Sessions			
NA	NA	NA	NA
HHS Leadership Visits to Indian Country			
NA	NA	NA	NA
Meetings with Individual Tribes			
January, 06	Hopi Tribal Consultation	Director, Hopi EPA ATSDR Attendees: Division of Toxicology and Environmental Medicine and Division of Regional Operations	The consultation was related to a planned chemical evaluation for toxaphene in sheep dip vats. This was at the request of the Hopi.
March, 2006	Native Village of Port Graham and Native Village of Seldovia	NVPG – Tribal Chair and Council NV Seldovia – Environmental Manager ATSDR Attendees: Division of Health Assessment and Consultation; Division of Regional Operations; Office of Tribal Affairs	At the request of the village councils, ATSDR representatives met in consultation to discuss outcomes of an evaluation of the public health effects from harvesting of traditional foods from the Cook Inlet.
June, 2006	10 Tribes affected by the Tar Creek, OK Superfund Site	Tribes in attendance: Ottawa, Cherokee Nation; Wyandotte Nation and Peoria. ATSDR Attendees: Division of Health Assessment and Consultation; Division of Regional Operations; Office of Tribal Affairs	This consultation session provided an opportunity for the agency to present a plan for various public health activities to address concerns from the tribes about environmental exposures and for the tribes to discuss this with the agency and for the group to reach agreement on the plan.

Section III - Outcomes and Accomplishments

Priority #3: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention:

ATSDR released the following reports at the request of Tribes:

- Evaluation of Biota Data Collected in the Vicinity of Tyonek, Seldovia, Port Graham, and Nanwalek, Alaska
- Penobscot River, Maine, Public Health Consultation
- Hopi Dip Vats Public Health Consultation
- Yerrington Anaconda Mine Site Public Health Consultation
- Navajo Dip Vats Public Health Consultation

These reports provide vital information for the Tribes to make decisions related to the potential for harm to their people via exposures to environmental contaminants. The reports also provided recommendations for the Tribes for health promotion and behavioral changes to prevent disease. The agency's work with the Native Villages in the Cook Inlet region of Alaska has focused on tribal concerns about contamination of traditional foods by local pollution sources and by global migration of contamination via the marine and air currents into the Arctic region. Benefits of those foods for a healthy lifestyle are included while defining any risk from exposures.

Priority #4: Recruitment and Retention of Healthcare Providers:

During this Fiscal Year, ATSDR released new 5-year funding for the Cooperative Agreement Program to Build Capacity and to Conduct Site-Specific Activities. Recipients included:

- Gila River Indian Community
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortia and Alaska Division of Public Health

ATSDR is also funding cooperative agreements with Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). Accomplishments within the TCU agreements are focused on building degreed programs for tribal students in environmental public health. Key accomplishments include:

- An MOU between Dine' College and The Institute for Public Health University of New Mexico – to have personnel collaborate and share resources for the purpose of developing public health training programs on the Navajo Nation; to advance the implementation of the existing Associate of Science degree program in the Public Health at Dine' College and contribute to the formalization of educational and training requirements for workforce development, including graduate education, within the Navajo Nation Division of Health.