



Dear Tribal Leader,

On February 9, 2010, First Lady Michelle Obama unveiled her *Let's Move!* initiative to combat child obesity. Childhood obesity in America is a national health crisis. As President Barack Obama's Childhood Obesity Task Force has noted, American Indian/Alaska Native children are particularly susceptible to childhood obesity and related diseases, such as type 2 diabetes. A study of four year-olds found that obesity is more than two times more common among American Indian/Alaska Native children (31%) than among white (16%) or Asian (13%) children. This rate is higher than any other racial or ethnic group studied.

For this reason, the U.S. Departments of Interior, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Education have come together with the White House Domestic Policy Council to develop a joint approach to address this disparity through the *Let's Move!* in Indian Country initiative. As we develop this initiative we want to ensure that we are collaborating with Tribal Leaders and governments throughout the process. Attached is a short briefing document that provides an overview of the *Let's Move!* in Indian Country and establishes federal policy goals in four key areas. We would greatly appreciate your review, edits, additions, and recommendations to the attached briefing documents, which will serve as the driving force for this initiative.

We would like to provide multiple opportunities and venues for Tribal input and collaboration listed below.

**Written Response:** Please review the attached draft briefing document submit any edits, questions, comments, or concerns via email to [Letsmoveinindiancountry@doi.gov](mailto:Letsmoveinindiancountry@doi.gov) no later than Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. Please be sure to include your NAME, TRIBE, POSITION, EMAIL, and PHONE NUMBER.

**Conference Call:** A Tribal Collaboration conference call on the *Let's Move!* in Indian Country (LMIC) initiative will be held Thursday, February 17, 2011 at 1:00pm EST. Please review the attached draft briefing document prior to the meeting and be prepared to provide guidance and recommendations to help develop this initiative.

Dial-in Number: 800-369-3384  
Participant Code: 8621707#

**In-Person Meeting:** A Tribal Collaboration meeting on the *Let's Move!* in Indian Country (LMIC) initiative will be held in conjunction with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), 2011 Executive Council Winter Session in Washington, DC. The LMIC meeting is being held on

**Wednesday, March 2, 2011, 1 PM-3 PM(EST)** at the **Westin Washington Hotel, Ashlawn North Room, 1400 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C.** Please review the attached draft briefing document prior to the meeting and be prepared to provide guidance and recommendations to help develop this initiative. To participate, please e-mail Ms. Brandi Sweet by email ([brandi.sweet@bie.edu](mailto:brandi.sweet@bie.edu), providing your NAME, TRIBE, POSITION, EMAIL, PHONE NUMBER.

We hope you will provide us with input either in writing via e-mail, via phone, or in person at the NCAI 2011 Executive Council Winter Session.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this important issue for our community!

Sincerely,

<hr/> <i>/Robin Schepper/</i> <hr/>	2.2.11
Robin Schepper, Executive Director <i>Let's Move!</i> Initiative	Date
<hr/> <i>/Larry Echo Hawk/</i> <hr/>	2.2.11
Larry Echo Hawk, Assistant Secretary- Indian Affairs U.S. Department of the Interior	Date
<hr/> <i>/Yvette Roubideaux/</i> <hr/>	1.31.11
Yvette Roubideaux, Director, Indian Health Service U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Date
<hr/> <i>/Kevin Concannon/</i> <hr/>	2.2.11
Kevin Concannon, Under Secretary U.S. Department of Department of Agriculture	Date
<hr/> <i>/Thelma Melendez/</i> <hr/>	1.31.11
Thelma Melendez, Assistant Secretary, Elementary and Secondary Education U.S. Department of Education	Date

Attachment

# DRAFT



## *Let's Move! in Indian Country*

*“And so I’m asking you to start a conversation about childhood obesity in your community. Sometimes all it takes is someone to start asking questions. How can we get healthier foods in our schools? Are our playgrounds safe enough? Can we start a flag football or a soccer league? Where can we break ground for a community garden to grow foods that are both healthy and traditional?”*

*We know that every neighborhood, every community, every tribe is different...[b]ut we also know that one constant is that this problem won’t fix itself. It takes people like you to lead the way if we’re going to give our kids a brighter future.”*  
*-First Lady Michelle Obama, November 2010*

Childhood obesity in America is a national health crisis. As President Barack Obama’s Childhood Obesity Task Force has noted, American Indian/Alaska Native children are particularly susceptible to childhood obesity and related diseases, such as type 2 diabetes. A study of four year-olds found that obesity is more than two times more common among American Indian/Alaska Native children (31%) than among white (16%) or Asian (13%) children. This rate is higher than any other racial or ethnic group studied.

Elected Tribal leaders in rural and reservation communities and other community leaders such as school officials and Urban Indian Center coordinators have the ability to spur action in the areas of health, wellness, nutrition and physical activity. Throughout our country’s history, Native communities have provided some of the best examples of healthy food and sustainable community-based practices. Many groups in Indian Country are continuing to lead by example by following traditional paths that have existed for thousands of years.

To build on the strength of this tradition, and to address the health crisis that young American Indians and Alaska Natives are facing, the Obama Administration has formed an interagency collaboration called *Let’s Move! in Indian Country*. Participants include representatives from the First Lady’s *Let’s Move!* initiative, the White House Domestic Policy Council, the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Education. Informed by research and recommendations in the President’s Childhood Obesity Task Force Report, we have set four main goals for *Let’s Move! in Indian Country*:

1. ***Creating a Healthy Start on Life:*** A proven strategy for reducing the risk of childhood obesity early in life is improving breastfeeding rates. The President’s task force has recommended increasing the number of health care facilities that use maternity care practices that empower new mothers to breastfeed, such as the Baby-Friendly hospital standards which is an internationally recognized designation for supporting maternal breastfeeding practices in hospitals. Our goal for *Let’s Move! in Indian Country* is to:

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Send comments or questions to: [Letsmoveinindiancountry@doi.gov](mailto:Letsmoveinindiancountry@doi.gov)

- *certify all federally-run IHS obstetrics facilities as Baby Friendly Hospitals by 2012. Encourage Tribally-run obstetrics facilities to make similar policy changes and achieve Baby Friendly Hospital status as well.*

2. **Developing Healthy Schools:** Children spend over six hours each day at school, on average, and often additional hours in afterschool programs and activities. The school environment can have a strong impact on their behavior, health, and well-being. Our goals for *Let's Move! in Indian Country* are to:

- a. *transform the school and afterschool environments of 100 schools that serve Native youth through increased access to USDA's Food and Nutrition Services programs, school/community garden initiatives, Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, and physical activity programs by the end of 2012.*
- b. *standardize health and wellness policies at all BIE operated schools to include healthy choices and lifestyle recommendations by the end of 2012.*

3. **Increasing Physical Activity:** Both children and adults today get far too little physical activity, which is an important part of preventing obesity and staying healthy. Our goal for *Let's Move! in Indian Country* is to:

- *engage 25,000 people in Indian Country in the President's Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) program by Fall 2011 which builds healthy habits by getting participants committed to regular physical activity five days a week for six weeks. This is part of a larger goal set by the First Lady of having one million Americans complete PALA and be on their way to a healthier lifestyle.*

4. **Fostering Healthy, Comprehensive Food Systems Policies:** The President's task force has recommended that communities establish food policy councils, which help stakeholders come together to tackle the problem of improving access to affordable, healthy foods. Our goal for *Let's Move! in Indian Country* is to:

- *encourage the establishment of 20 tribal or inter-tribal food policy councils/committees across Indian Country to enhance comprehensive food system policy to improve health.*

The *Let's Move!* initiative recognizes we will be building upon many important efforts that are already being made in Indian Country to address the crisis of childhood obesity. And government alone cannot solve the obesity problem and reach the goal of ending the epidemic of obesity in a generation. We want to support and leverage Indian Country's help, expertise, and commitment on the ground. We want to support public/private sector partnerships that will further support and expand upon the great work happening throughout Indian Country. Each tribe is unique and tribal leaders must be involved in order for *Let's Move! in Indian Country* to succeed. We want to work with you to reduce childhood obesity and related conditions in your tribe so that Native youth can grow, thrive and meet their full potential in life.