

New Approach Launched To Reduce Tribal Alcohol And Substance Abuse Problems

WASHINGTON – Attorney General Eric Holder, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretary Ken Salazar recently announced a new federal framework to assist American Indian and Alaska Native communities in achieving their goals in the prevention, intervention and treatment of alcohol and substance abuse.

The framework, captured in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by Attorney General Holder, Secretary Sebelius and Secretary Salazar was published in the Federal Register: www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-08-05/pdf/2011-19816.pdf . It was called for in the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010, which President Obama signed into law in July 2010.

The MOA describes how the Office of Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse established in HHS' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA <http://www.samhsa.gov/tloa>) will coordinate tribal substance abuse programs across the federal government with a special emphasis on promoting programs geared toward reaching youth and offering alternatives to incarceration.

"A truly holistic approach is necessary when addressing substance abuse in Indian Country because we know that where alcohol and substance abuse are prevalent, public safety concerns are similarly prevalent," said Attorney General Holder. "This new office will help further the

commitment of the Justice Department and our partner agencies to build and sustain safe, secure and healthy tribal communities."

"Alcoholism and addiction are among the most severe public health and safety problems facing American Indian and Alaska Native people," said HHS Secretary Sebelius. "It doesn't have to be this way. With help that is based in the rich Indian culture these conditions just like other health conditions can be successfully prevented and treated."

"There is a clear need to align, leverage, and coordinate federal resources so that we can best support tribal efforts to build healthy and safe communities," said DOI Secretary Salazar. "This new office will serve as the federal focal point for this critically important work."

An interdepartmental coordinating council will guide the overall direction of the new federal effort to improve its work with tribal communities beginning with determining the scope of the problem – identifying and assessing national, state, tribal and local alcohol and substance abuse programs and resources; and creating standards for programs.

"The collaboration among agencies and departments that got us to this announcement is already paying off," SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde said. "Our work with tribal communities has resulted in a new \$50 million budget proposal in 2012 for Tribal Prevention Grants, better understanding of law enforcement and judicial training needs, and serious new work and investments in suicide prevention in Indian country."



The Sac and Fox Nation recently made a donation to the Davenport Fire Department for a CPR machine and a defibrillator. (L-R) Committee Member Stella Nullake, Richard Bailey, Principal Chief Sac and Fox Nation George Thurman. (Staff Photo)



The Sac and Fox Nation recently made a donation to the Stroud Little League Baseball Association for equipment and field maintenance. (L-R) Committee Member Stella Nullake, President Stroud Little League Baseball Association Chris Miller, Principal Chief Sac and Fox Nation George Thurman. (Staff Photo)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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ATTENTION

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