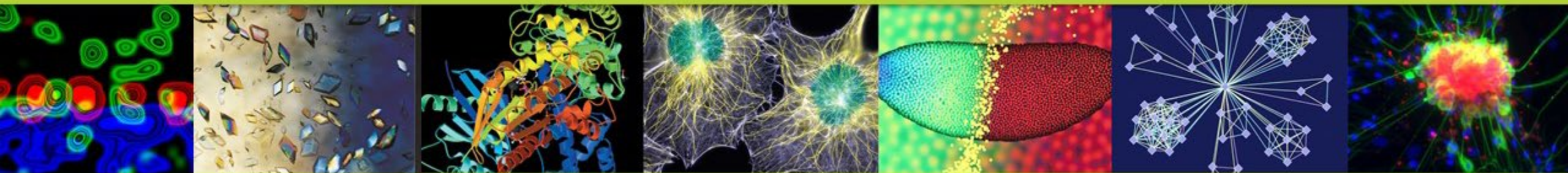**National Institute of General Medical Sciences**

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Evaluation of the NIH Native American Research Centers for Health (NARCH) Program: Next Steps

Evaluation Timeline

- **CY 2020:** NIGMS performed a comprehensive analysis of the NARCH program.

- **February 17, 2021**: Dear Tribal Leader Letter sent to all federally-recognized tribes.

- **March 16, 2021**: Orientation meeting for the NARCH evaluation working group.

- **April 23, 2021**: Full-day meeting of the working group to discuss NARCH program analysis/data and to develop draft suggestions.

- **May 18, 2021**: Presentation of meeting results to the NIH Tribal Advisory Committee.

- **June 14, 2021**: Tribal consultation regarding draft suggestions.

- **August 16, 2021**: Written feedback received from Tribal Leaders.

- **September 9, 2021**: Presentation to NIGMS Council by panel committee chairs.

- **September 30, 2021**: Written response to Tribal Leaders posted.

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Summary of What We Heard from Formal Tribal Consultation*

1. Ensure that both research projects and research infrastructure/capacity building are primarily conducted by Tribal Nations and communities rather than by academic partner institutions.

2. Remove barriers to application by reducing complexity of submission requirements, particularly for Tribal Nations or Organizations that do not already hold NIH grants.

3. Ensure that reviewers understand the importance of culture and language as research elements for examining health disparities, resilience, and dealing with trauma in Indian Country.

   a. Ensure that NIH utilizes the [American Indian and Alaska Native Research in the Health Sciences: Critical Considerations for the Review of Research Applications](#) as part of the application review process.

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Summary of What We Heard from Formal Tribal Consultation*

4. Support AI/AN trainees earlier in the training pathway (starting in high school) and provide greater support to AI/AN institutions of higher learning (i.e., TCUs).

5. Provide stable Administrative Core funding and increase overall program funding to support new grantees alongside existing ones.

6. Make funding announcements continuous rather than on the current skipped year cycle.

7. Create opportunities for new applicants to learn from existing grantees through mentorship or collaboration on proposals.

8. Conduct regular Tribal Consultations, including consultations related to programmatic changes and future program evaluations.

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Planned Changes to the NARCH Program

○ Have one receipt date per year

○ Allow for renewals

○ Simplify application and award administration

○ Increase emphasis on capacity building projects

○ Increase emphasis on Tribes conceiving and conducting the research themselves

- Including ensuring that Tribally-based researchers receive appropriate credit and recognition

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Planned Changes to the NARCH Program (Continued)

- ○ Allow preK-12 career development projects

- ○ Allow alteration and renovation (A&R) projects (especially for TCUs)

- ○ Enhance reviewer training using the principles in [American Indian and Alaska Native Research in the Health Sciences: Critical Considerations for the Review of Research Applications](#)

- ○ Align review criteria with the above goals

  - • Including recognizing culturally appropriate research questions, methods, researchers, and outcomes measures (e.g., not necessarily those from traditional academia)

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Possible New Programs (in Addition to NARCH)

Needs Assessment and Planning Grants for Tribes without NARCH Awards

- Provide time and resources to allow Tribes to assess research and capacity building needs and develop plans to address them

  - Time and support for Tribes to define research questions and plan how to answer them

  - Time and support for Tribes to assess capacity-building and training needs

  - Time to build administrative capacity for application support and grants management

  - Time to identify any needed consultants, contractors or collaborators

- Could support meetings, travel, staff time, consultation, etc.

- Goal would be to increase number of competitive NARCH and other grant applications to support Tribally-driven and conducted research

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Possible New Programs (in Addition to NARCH)

Tribal Technical Assistance and Resource Center(s)

- ○ Provide support for Tribes in applying for and administering NIH grants

- ○ Training and consulting to help Tribes establish their own Sponsored Programs Offices

- ○ Training and consulting to help Tribes develop capacity for financial administration of NIH (or HHS?) grants

- ○ Similar to concept for SuRE Resource Center (PAR-21-227)

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Possible New Programs (in Addition to NARCH)

Grants to Tribes to help them build or enhance their own Sponsored Programs Offices

- Develop tribal capacity to apply for and administer grants

- Could support, e.g., staff training, systems purchases/upgrades, consulting services

- Similar to NIH Sponsored Programs Administration Development (SPAD) program: RFA-RM-19-004

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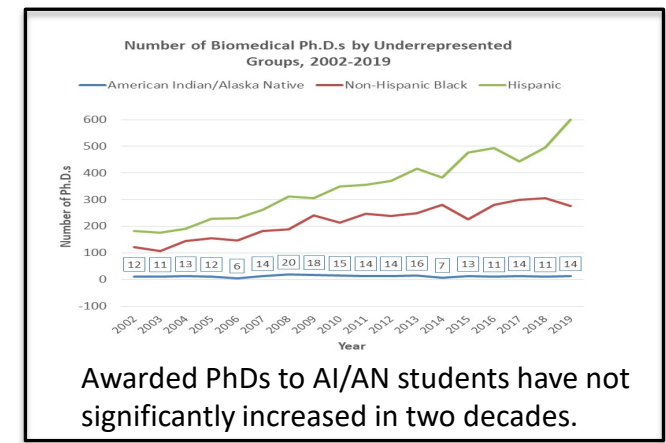# Possible New Programs (in Addition to NARCH)

Grants to Support the Establishment or Enhancement of Tribal Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)

- ○ Could support staff time, consultation, training, systems procurement or development, etc.

- ○ NARCH currently allows IRB development/enhancement projects but is this sufficient?

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Possible New Programs (in Addition to NARCH)

Training Grants for Tribes/Tribal Organizations

- Provide support for students selected by Tribes/Tribal Organizations to obtain degrees in biomedically-related fields

  - Undergraduate training grants (T34) – tuition remission and stipends for studies towards a BA/BS degree (including at 2-year colleges); research experiences; mentoring

  - Graduate training grants (T32) – tuition remission and stipends for studies towards a PhD; research experiences; mentoring; career development

- Goal would be to develop future AI/AN researchers

- Each grant would need to support students from multiple Tribes

  - How best to equitably select students to support?

Number of Biomedical Ph.D.s by Underrepresented Groups, 2002-2019

— American Indian/Alaska Native — Non-Hispanic Black — Hispanic

Awarded PhDs to AI/AN students have not significantly increased in two decades.

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Questions or Comments?