



Tribal Health Research Office

Division of Program Coordination, Planning, & Strategic Initiatives
National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Enhancing Communication and Collaboration

- Since 2015 has convened two-day, in-person NIH Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting twice a year. TAC is comprised of Tribal leaders from the 12 IHS Tribal areas. The TAC helps guide policies and programs and identify research priorities to best serve Tribal Nations.
- Partnered with the University of New Mexico and the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) for a Tribal Data Sharing and Genetics Policy Development Workshop in 2017 to discuss the risks and benefits of genetic research.
- Developed and published Genetic Research Guide in partnership with NHGRI. This community-focused guide was created with input from tribal representatives to ensure culturally appropriate language and content.
- Led the first ever tri-operating division Tribal Consultation on the Opioid Crisis in Indian Country in collaboration with Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- Coordinated the NIH Tribal Consultation on Intellectual Property (IP) rights in collaboration with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) to ensure Tribal leaders and communities understand issues related to identifying, protecting, and licensing intellectual property.

Building Research Capacity

- Successfully developed a regional training hub in the state of Washington to increase NIH engagement of AI/AN high school students and to prepare cohorts to be competitive for NIH summer research internships. NIH is expanding this model to other regions of the country during year two.
- Coordinated NIH collaboration with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) at their 2018 National Conference. THRO coordinated the participation of the Office of Scientific Workforce Diversity (SWD) and the Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office (SGMRO) to increase awareness of their research activities and training opportunities.

- Successfully engaged leadership at NIH Institutes leading to the first official Tribal Consultation by IC Directors at the 2018 NIH Tribal Consultation on Opioids. Directors of the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) and the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) heard recommendations from Tribes and urban Indian organizations about creating strategies to combat the opioid crisis in tribal communities.
- Engaged the NIH Tribal Advisory Committee in development of a Tribal Consultation Protocol for the NIH to create uniformity and consistency across the agency when engaging Federally recognized Tribes.

Expanding Research

- Established the Tribal Health Research Coordinating Committee (THRCC), which serves as a catalyst for synergizing research, research training, and career development initiatives focused on AI/AN health research. Members of the THRCC are appointed by the director of each institute and center to serve on the trans-NIH committee.
- Published Collaborative Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Funding Announcements with NIMHD to support Tribal Epidemiology Centers. The funding opportunity will foster partnerships that support community-responsive, scientifically rigorous projects and disseminate findings to local stakeholders, the Indian Health Service (IHS), and the scientific community.
- Published the first NIH AI/AN Health Research Portfolio to better understand the agency's investment in AI/AN focused research. The first research portfolio analysis focused on FY 2015. THRO is currently analyzing FY 2017 data.

Enhancing Cultural Competency and Community Engagement

- Convened the NIH TAC to represent the interests of AI/AN health research priorities through representation from each of the twelve geographic areas served by the IHS
- Solicited direct feedback from Tribal leaders on culturally relevant health research topics and approaches through the NIH TAC monthly calls and twice a year in-person meeting.
- Hosted annual Native American Heritage Month special seminars to enhance cultural awareness in the NIH research community.
- Hosted "Storytelling about Health and Wellness in AI/AN Communities" Video Challenge.
- Published article, Hull, S.C., Wilson (Diné), D.R. "Beyond Belmont: Ensuring Respect for AI/AN Communities Through Tribal IRBs, Laws, and Policies." *The American Journal of Bioethics* 2017;17:7:60-62.
- Published article, Walajahi, H, Hull, S.C., Wilson (Diné), D.R. "Constructing identities: the implications of DTC ancestry testing for tribal communities." *Genetics in Medicine* 2019.