

Indian Health Service Commitment Statement on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic

Centers for Disease Control data indicates that American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) had the second highest overdose death from rates from all opioids in 2016 (13.9 deaths/100,000 population) among racial/ethnic groups in the US. This same data set reflects AI/AN had the second highest overdose death rates from heroin (5.0) and third highest from synthetic opioids (4.1).

The overall mission of the Indian Health Service (IHS) is to raise the physical, mental, social and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska natives (AI/AN) to the highest level. The Indian Health Service has collaborated with tribes to promote appropriate and effective pain management, reduce overdose deaths from heroin and prescription opioid misuse, and improve access to culturally appropriate treatment and long-term recovery.

The IHS will continue to work with Tribes and Federal stakeholders to develop coordinated responses using every available resource possible to battle the opioid crisis in tribal communities. The IHS looks forward to enhancing partnerships and improving resource coordination between federal, state, and local entities.

The IHS supports the National Academy of Medicine's (NAM) Action Collaborative on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic and recognizes that the goals of the Action Collaborative overlap with the IHS Opioid Strategic Plan. The IHS will partner within the Action Collaborative workgroups to share AI/AN perspectives and assist with strengthening a coordinated opioid response through enhanced collaboration and identification of new high-value activities.

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