FEB 08 2016

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing to announce a new partnership established between the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). This new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) formalizes the partnership between IHS and BIA to reduce opioid overdoses among American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people.

The abuse of opioids such as heroin and prescription pain medication is a tragedy occurring throughout AI/AN communities. Death rates from prescription opioid overdose among the AI/AN population have increased almost four-fold since 2013.

This agreement will allow IHS pharmacies to provide Naloxone to as many as 500 BIA law enforcement officers, who will be trained to administer Naloxone to people experiencing opioid overdose. In an overdose, minutes matter, and these law enforcement officers are often first to arrive at the scene of an overdose emergency. Now these officers will be able to provide the rapid Naloxone treatment necessary to save lives.

This is such an important step forward that the White House Director of National Drug Control Policy joined us to announce the establishment of the MOU. Our recent press release on this partnership is available at www.ihs.gov/newsroom/pressreleases.

The IHS and BIA have established a Web Site to provide Tribes with valuable information, including sample Memorandums of Agreement, ways to seek funding resources, and training material for Tribes looking to start their own programs. The Web Site is available at www.bjatraining.org/tools/naloxone/Naloxone-Background.

For additional information, please contact Mr. Walter Castle, L.C.S.W., Alcohol and Substance Abuse Lead, Division of Behavioral Health, IHS. He can be reached by e-mail at walter.castle@ihs.gov or by telephone at (301) 443-2038. Thank you for your continued work to address these serious issues in our communities.

Sincerely,

/Robert G. McSwain/

Robert G. McSwain
Principal Deputy Director

Enclosure
IHS and BIA MOU