

Traditional Healing For Native Communities

Conventional behavioral health programs have not yielded the same outcomes within the American Indian community as they have for other communities. However, traditional healing, a multi-generational, multi-disciplinary approach to mental health and substance use disorder treatment, has been very successful.

The challenge

American Indians are experiencing the opioid epidemic more severely than other Minnesotans. American Indians Minnesotans are five times more likely to die from a drug overdose than white Minnesotans. American Indians experience the highest mental health, substance use and suicide rates of any racial/ethnic group in the United States today.

Traditional healing

Research consistently points to the value of traditional healing practices designed and delivered by American Indians, for American Indians. Traditional healing for American Indians has outcomes equivalent to conventional interventions in other populations.

Traditional healing is proven to:

- Address whole health and the root cause of inter-generational trauma
- Promote self-esteem and resiliency
- Keep families intact
- Help with identity formation and/or reclamation
- Be utilized as a coping skill
- Connect children, adults and elders and promote positive community integration and presence
- Helps assign meaning and purpose to life.

Planning and oversight

The Minnesota American Indian Mental Health Advisory Council and DHS are working together to integrate traditional healing into Minnesota's behavioral health continuum of care and to identify and develop a sustainable funding stream for traditional healing. The advisory council is made up of representatives of nine Tribal nations and urban Indian representation.

Opioid Epidemic Response Advisory Council was created in 2019 to oversee funds from prescribers, drug manufacturers and distributors to fight the opioid crisis. The council is charged to evaluate the success of traditional healing grants and make recommendations for continued funding. Membership on the council includes two members representing Indian tribes, one representing the Ojibwe tribes and one representing the Dakota tribes.

The Grants

10 Tribal Nations chose to participate. Legislation also included funding for five urban American Indian organizations to be awarded based on a competitive process.

Beginning in state fiscal years 2020-21, there are appropriations for \$2 million per year in traditional healing grants.

Grantees

Seven Anishinaabe nations:

- Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (E)
- Bois Forte Band of Chippewa (D)
- Red Lake Nation (A)
- White Earth Nation (B)
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (C)
- Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (F)

Three Dakota nations:

- Prairie Island Indian Community (I)
- Lower Sioux Indian Community (K)
- Upper Sioux Community (J)

Five urban Indian organizations

- American Indian Community Housing Organization
- American Indian Family Center
- Northwest Indian Community Development Center
- Native American Community Clinic
- Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center

