

National Indian Health Board



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Contacts: Stacy Bohlen, sbohlen@nihb.org
Ron Bialek, rbialek@phf.org

National Indian Health Board and Public Health Foundation Collaborate to Improve Health in Indian Country



WASHINGTON, DC – The National Indian Health Board and the Public Health Foundation took an important step in addressing a gap in the public health workforce in Indian Country by signing a memorandum of understanding that will outline specific steps to bring resources for quality improvement to Tribes. The MOU, jointly signed by PHF President Ron Bialek and Vinton Hawley, Vice-chairman and Phoenix Area Representative of the NIHB Board of Directors, and Tribal Chairman for the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, formalizes a commitment to collaborate and work to advance each other's missions.

PHF, a national non-profit organization based in Washington, DC, has a mission to improve the public's health by strengthening the quality and performance of public health practice. PHF's leading expertise in performance management, quality improvement, and workforce development has helped hundreds of health departments and public health organizations nationwide improve the health of their communities and build capacity of both individuals and organizations.

"Strengthening the quality and performance of public health practice in American Indian and Alaska Native communities is important work," said Bialek. "We are excited and honored to collaborate with NIHB to support and enhance the public health infrastructure in Indian Country."

NIHB is a leader in public health policy and programming in Indian Country. It proactively advocates for public health funding, awareness and visibility to strengthen infrastructure and combat poor health outcomes for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) peoples. As such, NIHB has spent the past two years enhancing its Tribal Accreditation Support Initiative (Tribal ASI) which provides funding, materials and support for AI/AN Tribes working to achieve accreditation for its public health programs and systems. A large part of this undertaking includes creating and embedding performance and quality improvement operations within Tribal health departments.

Stacy Bohlen, Executive Director of the National Indian Health Board, said, "The partnership with the Public Health Foundation is timely as we have more and more Tribes becoming interested in undertaking public health accreditation and seeking to building a culture of quality improvement within their health systems."

The significant overlap in activities and gaps in respective expertise led NIHB and PHF to seek out ways through which the two organizations can engage in formal collaborative and mutually beneficial activities. At the NIHB Board of Directors meeting, Bialek was invited to present on how the two organizations can work together to help build quality improvement capacity in Indian Country. Following the presentation, the two organizations signed the MOU, which formally paves the way for the two organizations to seek out joint funding and reach deeper in AI/AN communities to meet outstanding public health needs through advanced training and technical assistance.



Embodying the spirit of the MOU, PHF presented at the NIHB National Tribal Public Health Summit, April 11-13, 2016 in Atlanta, Georgia on how to use a population health driver diagram to address tribal population health priorities.

Founded in 1972, NIHB is a 501(c) 3 not for profit, charitable organization providing health care advocacy services, facilitating Tribal budget consultation and providing timely information, and other services to all Tribal governments. NIHB also conducts research, provides policy analysis, program assessment and development, national and regional meeting planning, training, technical assistance, program and project management. NIHB presents the Tribal perspective while monitoring, reporting on and responding to federal legislation and regulations. It also serves as conduit to open opportunities for the advancement of American Indian and Alaska Native health care with other national and international organizations, foundations corporations and others in its quest to build support for, and advance, Indian health care issues.

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