

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 5, 2013

CONTACT: Alice Alecu  
 [\(202\) 543-6461 ext. 101](tel:(202)543-6461)

### ***WEBINAR SERIES FOCUSING ON THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE MALE HEALTH KICKS OFF DURING MEN'S HEALTH MONTH***

*Partnering for Wellness: Charting a Course to Hope, Healing, and Health for Native Males and Their Families*, the first in a series of webinars, will kick off during Men's Health Month in June. The webinar series seeks to raise awareness of the health disparities facing American Indian and Alaska Native males and their families, recently highlighted in a report entitled: *A Vision of Wellness and Health Equity for AI/AN Boys and Men* by Men's Health Network (MHN) and the Office of Minority Health.

<http://www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/AIANMaleHealthDisparites.pdf>

The series is part of a historic, ground-breaking collaborative effort of concerned stakeholders who want to bring greater attention and understanding to this complex and pervasive public health problem. Hosted by the Indian Health Service (IHS), along with The Men's Health Network, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Office of Minority Health (OMH) and Society of Public Health Education (SOPHE), the 6-part series will address not only the current challenges but also highlight solutions and promising practices now underway in the community.

"Recent data indicates that AI/AN male health is not improving...and we need to involve many stakeholders to identify barriers and promote solutions," said Leo J. Nolan III, an enrolled member of the St. Regis Mohawk tribe, who spent 25 years working at IHS, serving as Senior Policy Analyst for External Affairs for 12 years.

"This is not an issue that can be addressed by just one group. We need to involve not only health professionals, but community members as well. These health disparities effect families...not just individuals...so we must open a dialogue and identify solutions that lead to wellness, that can positively impact the community."

Based on data published by the IHS, for some age groups AI/AN males experience death rates 200 to 500 percent greater than AI/AN females for suicide, HIV/AIDS, homicide, unintentional injuries, diabetes, firearm injury, and alcohol-related deaths and 10 to 50 percent higher than AI/AN females from cancer, heart disease, and liver disease. Furthermore, based on the National Health Interview Survey, AI/ANs are the only racial/ethnic group in which males experience higher levels of self-reported psychological distress than females. To date, these disparities are not

widely acknowledged and subsequently, AI/AN male-focused interventions have rarely been attempted.

Panelists will include: Dr. Susan Karol, Chief Medical Officer, IHS, will present opening remarks; Ana Fadich, Vice President, MHN will introduce the organization; Mose Herne, Director, Division of Planning, Evaluation and Research, IHS, will present an overview and current state of the problem; Rod Robinson, Director, Office of Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse, SAMHSA, will highlight the public and private partnerships of alcohol and substance abuse; and Rick Haverkate, Senior Project Analyst in the OMH Resource Center (OMHRC), will address the consequence of continued neglect, gaps in data and research, and opportunities for building a collaborative network to achieve Native male health equity.

The next webinar in the series, scheduled for July 18<sup>th</sup>, will focus on youth-focused interventions. Entitled *Building Resilience, Community and Culture Among Young Native Men and Boys*, tentative speakers include: Larke Huang, Senior Advisor in the Administrator's Office of Policy Planning and Innovation at SAMHSA ; Brian Yazzie, National Director of Native American Services, Boys and Girls Clubs of America; Keola Chan, 'Aha Kane; [Dr. Sylvester Briggs](#), Youth Residential Treatment Center (YRTC); Erin Bailey, Director of the Center for Native American Youth, Aspen Institute.

Subsequent topics include obesity and diabetes, family-focused interventions, domestic violence and sexual assault prevention, suicide prevention, veterans health, offender re-entry, and challenges associated with caring for the elderly in the community.

**DATE - Thursday, June 13, 1 p.m. EST**

**TITLE - *Partnering for Wellness: Charting a Course to Hope, Healing, and Health for Native Males and Their Families***

**WHEN: Thursday, June 13, 1:00 p.m. EST** (long in 10 minutes beforehand)

**LOCATION:** <http://ihs.adobeconnect.com/r77im31j7f9/>

Room Passcode: ihs123  
+18008320736