

**American Indian/Alaska Native Health Research Advisory Council (HRAC)  
Quarterly Conference Call  
February 3, 2010**

**HRAC Tribal Delegates and Alternates**

- Judith Bender, Aberdeen Area Proxy
- Tim Gilbert, Alaska Area Alternate
- Francine C. Gachupin, Albuquerque Area Alternate
- Kathy Hughes, Bemidji Area Delegate
- Elizabeth Neptune, Nashville Area Delegate
- Madan Poudel, Navajo Area Delegate
- Cara Cowan Watts, Oklahoma Area Delegate
- Violet Mitchell-Enos, Phoenix Area Alternate
- Stephen Kutz, Portland Area Delegate
- Chester Antone, Tucson Area Delegate
- Sarah Hicks, National Congress of American Indians Alternate

**HRAC Federal Partners**

- Wendy Perry, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- Sue Clain, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
- Alan Trachtenberg, United States Public Health Service/Indian Health Service
- Wilbur Woodis, Office of Minority Health

**Other Attendees**

- Kim Romine, Executive Director, Intradepartmental Council on Native American Affairs
- Puneet Sahota, National Congress of American Indians, PRC Post-doctoral Fellow
- Dawn Houle, Tribal Self-Governance Advisory Committee/Indian Health Service

**Meeting Minutes**

- A quorum was reached on the call.

**Call to Order and Introductions**

- Introductions and facilitation: Cara Cowan Watts, Co-Chair

**1. National Children's Study (NCS)**

- Alan Trachtenberg (IHS) gave an update on the status of the NCS regarding HRAC's recommendations to include American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children in the study. He also provided some updates regarding the National Institutes of Health's changes in personnel.
  - Dr. Alan Guttmacher is the new Acting Director at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), which is the lead agency for the NCS study.
  - Dr. Trachtenberg has been part of two meetings with NCS staff, including one with the Acting Director. It appears they have a real interest and commitment to find resources to conduct a parallel Northern Plains and

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Alaska Native adjunct study. The NCS was conscious of the letter HRAC sent to Health and Human Services' Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius, back in January.

- The NCS held a Federal Partner meeting in January and have made some changes in order to find different ways to enrich their sample including practitioner-based and community-based.

## **2. NCAI Policy Research Center's Youth Suicide Prevention Resource Paper**

- Sarah Hicks and Puneet Sahota from the National Congress of American Indians provided an overview of the Resource Paper, which is a meta-analysis of the Native youth suicide prevention literature with the intention of highlighting promising practices and resources.
  - Puneet Sahota discussed the scope and timeline of the paper. The Resource Paper aims to:
    - 1) Cover the scope of the problem.
    - 2) Make policy and practice recommendations based on the research and programs already out there and make the findings more relevant to Tribal leaders.
    - 3) Review past research (meta-analysis).
  - Ms. Sahota asked the HRAC to consider the following questions:
    - 1) What kinds of research studies would you like to see discussed in this paper?
    - 2) What kinds of research studies on suicide prevention would be important to your community?
    - 3) Are you familiar with specific programs related to suicide prevention that should be included in the paper?
    - 4) What resources do you suggest we examine in preparing this paper?
    - 5) What kinds of policy or practice recommendations would you like to see included in the paper?
    - 6) How can we make this paper most useful to Tribal leaders?
    - 7) How can we make this paper most useful to health practitioners?
    - 8) What other questions do you have that you would like us to answer in the paper?
  - Kathy Hughes, Co-Chair (Bemidji Area), suggested that they contact the EpiCenters to find out what data they have available.
  - Violet Mitchell-Enos (Phoenix Area) suggested that they get in contact with HHS' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) regarding the newly released Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention grants as they should have data to support the program.

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- Stephen Kutz (Portland Area) mentioned that he planned on speaking with his mental health staff and would like to provide comments.
- Ms. Sahota (NCAI) said she would like comments by February 15th if possible or by the end of the month as they would like to have the rough draft completed by March/April. The Resource Paper is to be released to the public in June of this year.
- Ms. Sahota (NCAI) advised the HRAC that they could provide feedback by phone, (202) 669-8622 or email, psahota@ncai.org.
- Tim Gilbert (Alaska Area) said he was glad that NCAI was putting effort on this topic as his area has very high rates of suicide. They are already involved in many prevention and intervention activities and have already received funds from IHS. They know the rates, so they would like to hear about evidence based or promising practices. He suggested that a panel or presentation be conducted during NCAI's Mid Year Session Conference on current practices within the other IHS areas.
- Chester Antone (Tucson Area) mentioned that he was working on the testimony to be provided during the HHS Tribal Budget Consultation Session. He welcomed any comments or help in developing the testimony. He told NCAI to contact Wilbur Woodis (OMH) as he has some suicide prevention information from HHS.
- Madan Poudel (Navajo Area) mentioned there are a variety of sources of data including IHS and Tribal. He posed the following questions:
  - 1) Is NCAI getting their data from IHS or Tribal sites?
  - 2) Are you having problems getting data?
    - Ms. Sahota responded by saying they collect published data and focus on what information they can collect anecdotally.
- Sue Clain (ASPE) discussed and emailed HRAC an article that was published in 1999 and mentioned it had what seemed to be a very useful finding that increasing protective factors was more effective at reducing the probability of a suicide attempt than was decreasing risk factors. The article can be found at: "Suicide Attempts Among American Indian and Alaska Native Youth," Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine, vol. 153, June 1999, pp. 573-580.
- Violet Mitchell-Enos (Phoenix Area) expressed concern about studies looking strictly at data, as many do not understand the community to put it in the right context. She urged NCAI to focus on best practices and promising practices so we're not re-inventing the wheel.
- Sarah Hicks (NCAI) said at the end of the paper they would like to add a Best Practices and Promising Practices section.

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**3. HHS Tribal Budget Consultation**

- Cara Cowan Watts, Co-Chair (Oklahoma Area), is working with JT Petherick, Cherokee Nation Health Staff, to develop HRAC testimony.
- She asked for feedback on items to include with this year's testimony.
- An additional paper will be submitted with the testimony regarding suicide prevention as previously mentioned.
- Kathy Hughes, Co-Chair (Bemidji Area), said the HRAC needs to indicate that new measures and a new budget must be developed as the suicide problem has not been taken care of and is growing in some areas.
- Chester Antone (Tucson Area) is developing the suicide testimony and will email to the HRAC for review and comments.
- Madan Poudel (Navajo Area) asked that last year's testimony be sent out to HRAC for review.

**4. HRAC Face to Face Meeting**

- Kendra King Bowes (Native American Management Services, Inc.) announced that the 1st HRAC meeting of 2010 will take place on Thursday, March 18th. NAMS is in the process of negotiating with a hotel in Washington, DC and will send out the HRAC agenda and logistics sheet in the next week. The meeting will be held at the Hubert Humphrey Building.

**5. National Indian Health Board Public Health Summit's Call for Proposals**

- The meeting will take place on May 18-20, 2010 in Albuquerque, NM.
- Kendra King Bowes (NAMS) asked if there are any HRAC members planning to attend? If so, would you be willing to serve on an HRAC panel if abstract is selected? The following HRAC members responded and are planning to attend:
  - Stephen Kutz (Portland Area)
  - Kathy Hughes, Co-Chair (Bemidji Area)
  - Cara Cowan Watts, Co-Chair (Oklahoma Area)
  - Madan Poudel (Navajo Area)