



SEP 2 2011

Dear Tribal Leader:

The purpose of this letter is to share with you an important update on the progress of the Indian Health Service (IHS), in conjunction with our Tribal and Urban partners, in developing Agency behavioral health strategic plans.

The enclosed documents, which are individually summarized below, represent the current strategic plans and direction for the IHS Division of Behavioral Health (DBH). The plans also include actions likely to address behavioral health and suicide prevention throughout the Indian health system as a whole. As we go forward, we intend to modify and adjust these documents collaboratively and consolidate our experience, as over time, objectives are met and others are developed. Implementation of these goals and plans will be overseen by the National Tribal Advisory Committee on Behavioral Health (NTAC), IHS Behavioral Health Work Group (BHWG), and IHS staff.

- The **National Behavioral Health Strategic Plan** sets out an ambitious strategy to better serve our beneficiaries and promote behavioral health services across the system of care.
- The **National Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan** promotes suicide prevention efforts by fostering collaborations across the entire Indian health system, including Tribes, Tribal organizations, Urban Indian organizations, and other key community resources.
- The **Behavioral Health Briefing Book** is an overview of current national programs and services that provides a context for strategic planning and program development.

The American Indian/Alaska Native **National Behavioral Health Strategic Plan** represents the combined efforts of Tribal, Federal, Urban, and other representatives across the country to develop strategic directions and goals for the entire Indian health system. It is the culmination of more than 2 years of close, collaborative work. It contains three overarching strategic directions, which are operationalized into 77 action steps, most of which are already in progress. It is the strategic framework for the continuing development of system-wide programs and services, with an added emphasis on establishing and sustaining collaboration among Tribal, Federal, and Urban programs.

The American Indian/Alaska Native **National Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan** represents the combined efforts of Tribal, Federal, Urban, and other representatives across the country to develop strategic goals and objectives to address the ongoing suicide epidemic that is occurring in so many of our communities. Accordingly, the plan provides 8 strategic goals and 14 objectives that have been developed specifically to target program planning and implementation in this area.

The American Indian/Alaska Native **Behavioral Health Briefing Book** is an overview of behavioral health programs throughout the Indian health system. It describes the context for the strategic plans and provides historical information, behavioral health challenges, and current behavioral health services and systems across Indian Country.

Achievement of the comprehensive goals identified in these strategic plans will require a concerted effort from all stakeholders in the Indian health system. I am committing the IHS to ongoing partnership with Tribes and Tribal and Urban organizations to achieve the goals outlined in these documents. With our combined efforts these goals are all achievable, and will benefit our people and our communities.

Sincerely,

/Yvette Roubideaux/

Yvette Roubideaux, M.D., M.P.H.
Director

Enclosures
National Behavioral Health Strategic Plan
National Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan
Behavioral Health Briefing Book