



December 28, 2022

Dear Tribal Leaders:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) will hold a tribal listening session on January 31, 2023 to obtain input on the development of the HHS Initiative to Strengthen Primary Health Care (Initiative).

HHS recognizes that effective primary health care is essential to achieving its goals of improving access to health care, health outcomes, and health equity for all, including American Indians and Alaskan Natives. In September 2021, it launched the HHS Initiative to Strengthen Primary Health Care (the Initiative) to achieve a federal foundation for the provision of comprehensive, coordinated whole person primary health care, to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities, and improve health equity.

Primary health care is an inclusive approach to health care services and policy that aims to improve health and wellbeing at individual, family, and population levels and advance health equity.<sup>1</sup> The scope of HHS programs addresses each of the **components of primary health care: integrated primary care services, public health services, community-based resources, and social services**. The Initiative will steer and coordinate federal efforts and partnerships to optimize facilitators, remove barriers, and pave the way for collaborative and synergistic efforts both across the federal government and with public and private stakeholders to bring the full value of primary health care to all people.

The OASH seeks information from Indian Country about possible HHS actions that may support Tribal efforts to improve the health of American Indian and Alaskan Native individuals, families, and communities through strengthened primary health care. In addition, we hope to increase the reach of the Initiative to Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations. The OASH will use the information shared to inform the Initiative, including the implementation of the Initial Action Plan, and will share key messages with our 14 collaborating HHS agencies. The OASH is separately meeting with Urban Indian Organizations.

The OASH is hosting a **virtual tribal listening session** to collect input and inform the HHS Initiative to Strengthen Primary Health Care.

Title: OASH Primary Health Care Listening Session with Tribal Leaders  
When: Tuesday, January 31, 2023  
Time: 01:00 PM Eastern Time to 02:30 PM Eastern Time (U.S. and Canada)

**You must register in advance for this meeting.** Register at:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltfuyvqikiEntK-h5P9Z1EVOQYSmXWSHU>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (2021). *Primary Health Care*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/primary-health-care>

meeting.

Objectives of the listening session follow.

1. Provide an overview of the HHS Initiative to Strengthen Primary Health Care.
2. Solicit feedback and input from Tribal Leaders to inform the Initiative.

Planned discussion questions follow.

1. What are your top three priorities for improving health and wellbeing in your communities?
2. What are the top three changes that HHS could implement that you feel are needed to strengthen primary health care in your communities?
3. What successful models or innovations have you implemented that are advancing the health and wellbeing in your communities that could be adapted and scaled by other communities?
4. How well do the components of primary health care (i.e., integrated primary care services, public health services, community-based resources, social services) work with each other in Indian Country to provide comprehensive health and wellbeing services for individuals, families, caregivers, and communities? How can this be strengthened?
5. The HHS Initiative to Strengthen Primary Health Care is interested in obtaining ongoing input from Tribal Nations, Tribal citizens, and communities on how federal programs may be leveraged to improve health and wellbeing by strengthening primary health care. How would you like to continue to work with the HHS Initiative to Strengthen Primary Health Care as we implement the initial Action Plan and plan and develop subsequent action plans?

The OASH is committed to assisting Tribal Nations in achieving improved health care access, health outcomes, and health equity in Indian Country. We look forward to your input.

The OASH is accepting written comments, as well, and appreciates your consideration. Submit written comments to [OASHPrimaryHealthCare@hhs.gov](mailto:OASHPrimaryHealthCare@hhs.gov). Please use the following subject line: Tribal Leader Listening Session. The deadline to provide written comments is Friday, March 3, 2023. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the OASH Primary Health Care Team at [OASHPrimaryHealthCare@hhs.gov](mailto:OASHPrimaryHealthCare@hhs.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Q22 MD".

Rachel L. Levine, M.D.  
ADM, USPHS