



## Indian Health Service Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Contact: (301) 443-3593, [newsroom@ihs.gov](mailto:newsroom@ihs.gov)

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### **IHS launches pilot project to strengthen health status of American Indians and Alaska Natives**

The Indian Health Service is announcing the launch of the National Health Coach Pilot Project, a much-anticipated effort to deliver health coach training to community and health professionals in Indian Country.

“The program aims to further advance the agency’s commitment to improving health care service delivery and enhancing critical public health services to strengthen the health status of American Indians and Alaska Natives,” said IHS Acting Deputy Director Elizabeth Fowler. “After completing this training, participants will be able to use current evidence-based health coaching techniques to facilitate improved patient care.”

The IHS is seeking applicants interested in becoming effective health coaches and who are currently working in tribal communities and health care settings across Indian Country. The health and wellness coaching field is an emerging discipline that champions healthy behavior changes as a means of avoiding, reducing the incidence, or lessening the effects of chronic lifestyle-related diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Health and wellness coaches are experts on human behavior, motivation, and health, helping their clients set and achieve health goals and build new habits.

Led by the [IHS Division of Clinical and Community Services](#), the pilot project includes two cohorts of 50 participants, with the first cohort completing their six-month training from April to October 2022. Eligible participants include community and health care professionals working across tribal communities and clinical settings who provide health information and patient education to Native patients and communities. [Applications for the first cohort](#) must be submitted by March 16.

Training will be provided by the [Legacy Holistic Health Institute](#), an approved training program for the [National Board for Health & Wellness Coaching](#), and will prepare participants who want to further their training by becoming a board certified health coach. The evidence-based, practitioner-applied training consists of behavior change theories, methods, and practices that can be adapted across various populations.

Upon completion of the pilot project in 2024, the IHS will use the results and feedback from participants to assess the feasibility of establishing a health and wellness coach and behavior change approach at the clinical and community levels. The pilot project will also assist IHS in evaluating the integration of health coaching concepts into programmatic priorities, including behavioral health, mental health, substance abuse, community health, and diabetes efforts.

For more information, please visit the [National Health Coach Pilot Project website](#) or [contact Project Manager Michelle Archuleta](#).

The IHS, an agency in the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#), provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.6 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who belong to [574 federally recognized tribes](#) in 37 states. Follow the agency via social media on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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