

Contact: Sharon M. Day
Tel. 612.721.0253
Email: smarieday@aol.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Landmark Meeting: HIV/AIDS Coalition of American Indians, Alaska Natives & Native Hawaiians Bring Native HIV/AIDS Concerns to Washington DC

WASHINGTON, DC – MAY 4, 2010 – After twenty-nine years into the HIV epidemic a federal inter-agency meeting was held with Indigenous Peoples. This historical meeting focused solely on Native HIV/AIDS issues with representatives of a National Coalition of 30 American Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian HIV/AIDS community-based organizations and programs. This meeting discussed the need for Native inclusion in HIV funding, programs and service priorities. The Coalition's over all objectives were to bring a Native face and voice to the domestic HIV epidemic: A face that has been invisible and a voice that has not been heard as a result of poor Native HIV/AIDS data collection. The Office of Minority Health Resource Center facilitated this meeting, which was attended by: Indian Health Service (IHS); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); the National Institute of Health (NIH); the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD).

With the induction of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*, which includes the reauthorization of both the *Indian Health Care Improvement Act* and the *Native Hawaiian Health Care Act*, and the release of President Obama's *Report on a National Dialogue on HIV/AIDS*, this meeting was timely as agencies are busy with the task of implementing health care reform. Part of this reform will be the new position of Director of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment within the Indian Health Service. The Coalition feels that this new position, spearheaded by Senator Al Franken (D) of Minnesota, is a great step towards addressing the unmet needs in Indian Country. In addition to the May 4th meeting, a handful of Coalition members met with staff from the White House Office of National AIDS Policy – Jeffery Crowley, Director and Adelle Simmons, also present was President Obama's Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs, Kimberly Teehee.

"This meeting is yet another example of the Obama administration's commitment to address health care disparities within Native communities - change has come." Opening remarks given by Sharon Day, a Co-Chair of the National Coalition and Executive Director of *Indigenous People's Task Force*.

The Coalition addressed their concerns based on collective experience and expertise and on the United States' Treaty and Trust Obligations to American Indians/Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiians. The following topic areas were covered during the meeting:

- Lack of Standardized Data Collection
- Lack of Native Representation at the table – regional and national
- Barriers of Funding Priorities
- Native Models for HIV Prevention and Outreach
- Integration of Traditional Medicine Practices
- Holistic Care & Treatment Models for Natives Living with HIV/AIDS
- Native Psychosocial Case Management Model
- Inclusion of Two-Spirit representation and concerns

For further information contact Co Chairs:

Sharon Day, ED Indigenous Peoples Task Force - smarieday@aol.com 612.721.0253
Harlan Pruden, NorthEast Two-Spirit Society – hpruden@gmail.com 646.351.7360

Contact: Sharon M. Day
Tel. 612.721.0253
Email: smarieday@aol.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians who are diagnosed with AIDS die sooner after their diagnosis than members of any other ethnic or racial group, suggesting that they are diagnosed late in the course of infection, after the point when antiretroviral drugs would have the most benefit. This is unacceptable. We as a nation must take bold action to promote the prompt diagnosis and treatment of all people with HIV, including members of native communities in the United States”. *Anthony S. Fauci, M.D. Director of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases National Institutes of Health.*

White House Meeting Photo (left to right): Kory Montoya (Jicarilla Apache), Jeffery Crowley (Director ONAP), Melvin Harrison (Navajo), Carolyn Kualii (Native Hawaiian/Apache), Pamela Jumper Thurman (Western Cherokee), Kimberly Teehee (Obama’s Senior Policy Advisor for NA Affairs/Cherokee), Harlan Pruden (Cree) and Sharon Day (Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe)