



September 8, 2020

Dear Tribal Leader:

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH), I am pleased to announce an upcoming partnership with the Indian Health Service (IHS) for a new project to support the national expansion of the [Community Health Aide Program](#) (CHAP).

In July, IHS announced the national expansion of the CHAP. Since its establishment in 1968, CHAP has proven effective for addressing health service delivery needs in rural Alaskan areas. The program provides education and training of Tribal community health providers to increase access to quality health care, health promotion and disease prevention services. OMH supports the IHS policy to expand CHAP from Alaska to the contiguous 48 states.

As key partners in meeting OMH's mission to improve the health of racial and ethnic minority and American Indian and Alaska Native populations through the development of policies and programs that help eliminate health disparities, Tribal communities play a vital role in protecting the health of communities. Likewise, OMH seeks to support the sustainability and spread of effective policies, programs and practices that improve health outcomes.

In partnership with IHS, OMH will support an assessment to identify the factors that promote or restrict the implementation of the national expansion of CHAP. I expect this assessment to result in the development of a resource to support Tribal communities in assessing readiness for CHAP implementation.

OMH is committed to improve the overall health of American Indian and Alaska Native communities. I look forward to our continued partnership through this new venture to support the national expansion of CHAP.

If you have any questions, please contact CAPT Damion KILLSBACK, OMH Senior Advisor for Tribal Affairs via email at [Damion.Killsback@hhs.gov](mailto:Damion.Killsback@hhs.gov) or by phone at 240-453-6177.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Felicia Collins".

RADM Felicia Collins, M.D., M.P.H.  
Assistant Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health  
Director, Office of Minority Health