

[HRSA Hosting Tribal Listening Session Regarding Historical Trauma and its Impact on the American Indian/Alaska Native Workforce](#)

Category: Policy Blog

written by Colin Tompson | March 20, 2023

On April 5, 2023, Health Resources & Services Administration's (HRSA) Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (IEA) will host a [tribal listening session](#) on understanding historical trauma and its impacts on the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) workforce. HRSA's goal is to advance tribal health systems and resources, partnering with federal agencies and other organizations to increase access to HRSA programs aimed to advance healthcare. Working with the tribal communities, HRSA aims to increase opportunities to access and optimize the quality and performance of the tribal health system increasing the capacity of Indian Country to respond to the impact of negative health outcomes among AI/AN communities. To help tribal organizations maximize the impact of key government programs, HRSA has prioritized increasing urban Indian health participation in the [Health Center Program](#).

Background

The mission of [HRSA IEA](#) is to provide accessibility and awareness of HRSA programs designed to increase healthcare access and address emerging public health issues. HRSA IEA serves as the principal Agency lead on intergovernmental and external affairs, regional operations, and tribal partnerships. HRSA IEA extends the reach of its programs by leveraging knowledge of national and regional contact located in various states, tribes, and territories. HRSA IEA also maintains partnerships across federal, state, and tribal networks to promote [Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) policy priorities.

AI/AN Historical Trauma

Historical trauma is the cumulative psychological and emotional [wounding across generations](#). For Tribal nations and the AI/AN community, historical trauma began during the eras of colonization, forced removal, and government sponsored boarding schools aimed to destroy AI/AN people and culture. Today, the [impact of historical trauma](#) is manifested in many ways among AI/ANs including [high rates of chronic diseases](#), suicides, domestic violence, alcoholism, and other social problems such as the [lack of culturally competent care](#) often leading to poor communication between physicians and patient that increase risk of misdiagnosis and loss of public trust. These ailments are negatively attributed across social determinants of health thereby impairing the ability to readily participate in the workforce.

NCUIH's Role

NCUIH has advocated extensively for policy related to healing and reconciliation of historical trauma which continues to afflict AI/AN communities. For example, [NCUIH endorsed the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States Act](#). This bill would create a Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States where impacts and ongoing effects of [Indian Boarding School Policies](#) are examined. The

Commission will also provide a space for AI/AN people to speak about their personal experiences in government-run boarding schools and allow them to provide recommendations to the government.