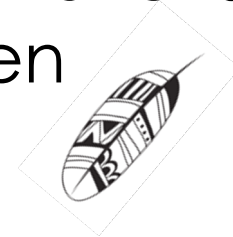




The Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children





The health and well-being of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children is fundamental to the future of Native people and communities.

Status of Native Children



- Native children experience severe health and socioeconomic disparities compared to other racial and ethnic groups in the U.S.
 - American Indian and Alaska Native children are 1.9 times as likely to die before age 24 than Non-Hispanic Whites (National Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 68, No. 9, 2019)
 - 30.7 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native children (under 18) live in poverty, compared to 18 percent in the U.S. (American Community Survey, 2018)
 - 22 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native children experience post-traumatic stress disorder, the same rate as veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and triple the rate of the general population (Department of Justice, 2014)
 - American Indian and Alaska Native youth ages 10 through 19 are twelve times as likely as Non-Hispanic Whites to be diagnosed with Type II diabetes (Diabetes in Youth Study, 2017)
 - American Indian and Alaska Native males age 15-24 are 2.4 times as likely as the U.S. male population 15-24 to commit suicide (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019)
 - Native Hawaiian youth aged 10 to 14, while constituting only 27 percent of that demographic, are 50 percent of completed suicides (Hawai'i Medical Journal 2011 Nov; 70(11 Suppl 2): 9-14))
- Historical trauma and intergenerational cycles of poverty contribute to the disproportionate health and well-being challenges faced by Native children and families today

The Historical Context



- Native people have experienced
 - The federal government's inability to comply with its trust responsibility
 - Federal agencies failing to work together with Tribes and Tribal organizations
 - Tribes and Tribal organizations hindered by insufficient funding
 - Lack of sharing data collected by state, federal and tribal programs
 - Western beliefs that may not be appropriate for Native children

The Current Context



- The federal government has a trust responsibility to provide for the education, health, and safety of Native children wherever they live
- Tribes are sovereign nations with an inherent authority for self-determination recognized by the U.S. Constitution
- 5.2 million people in the U.S. identify as American Indian and Alaska Native alone or in combination with other races, 2.1 million under 24 (Census, 2010)
- 1.2 million people in the U.S. identify as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, either alone or in combination with one or more other races (Census, 2010)
- Native people are diverse and reside throughout the U.S. in rural, reservation, and urban environments
- Native communities have many traditional and cultural strengths
- Current programs and supports for Native children are challenging for Native communities to navigate
- Limited data and research exists on the health and well-being of Native children

The Commission



- Established by Congress with bipartisan support
 - Sponsored by Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
- Will examine the unique challenges faced by Native children (including American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians)
- Will make recommendations on improving the current system by building on the strengths and leadership of Native communities, with the goal of developing a sustainable system that delivers wrap-around services to Native children

Commission Structure



- The 11-member Commission includes experts in areas of juvenile justice, social work, education, and mental and physical health
- Commission is advised by:
 - Native Advisory Committee consisting of representatives of tribes in all 12 Bureau of Indian Affairs regions, as well as a Native Hawaiian
 - Native Children Subcommittee consisting of Native children and youth with experience serving on the council of a tribal, regional, or national youth organization
- Commission is supported by detailees from the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Health and Human Services, Education, and Justice

Commissioners

- Gloria O'Neill (Chair), President/CEO, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc., AK
- Tami DeCoteau, Ph.D. (Vice Chair), DeCoteau Trauma-Informed Care & Practice, PLLC, ND
- Carlyle Begay, Former State Senator, AZ
- Dolores Subia BigFoot, Ph.D., Director, Indian Country Child Trauma Center, OK
- Jesse Delmar, Director, Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, AZ
- Anita Fineday, Managing Director of Indian Child Welfare Program, Casey Family Programs, MN
- Don Atqaqsaq Gray, Board Member, Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation, AK
- Leander R. McDonald, Ph. D. , President, United Tribes Technical College, ND
- Elizabeth Morris, Administrator, Christian Alliance for Indian Child Welfare, ND
- Melody Staebner, Fargo/West Fargo Indian Education Coordinator, ND



Commission Activities



- Conduct a comprehensive study of the programs, grants, and supports available for Native children, both at government agencies and on the ground in Native communities
- Hold public hearings throughout the U.S. to hear directly from Native children, community members, and other experts
- Issue a report with its recommendations on how to achieve better outcomes for Native children
 - The Commission will focus its recommendations on solutions to issues that would improve the health, safety, and well-being of Native children
 - Recommendations will recognize the diversity in cultural values and integrate the cultural strengths of the diverse communities of Native children

Commission Report



- The report will look at a variety of issues, including:
 - Child welfare
 - Physical, mental, behavioral health, and nutrition
 - Educational and vocational opportunities
 - School district policies and practices
 - Access to cultural and extracurricular activities
 - Juvenile justice
 - Early education and development
 - Wraparound services for Native children through increased coordination
 - Flexible use of existing federal programs
 - Improved data collection methods
 - Models of successful federal, state, and tribal programs

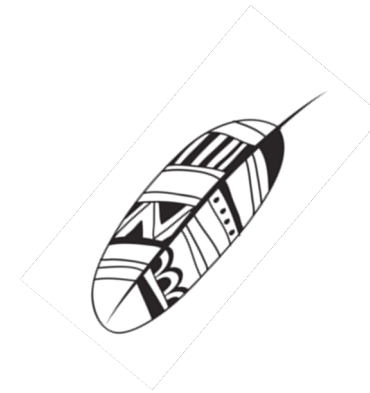
How to Support the Commission



- Help to spread the word about the Commission
- Identify experts the Commission should be talking to
- Identify best practices that the Commission should be aware of
- Share data or research for the Commission to review
- Testify at a public hearing
- Help us set up a visit to your community



Questions?

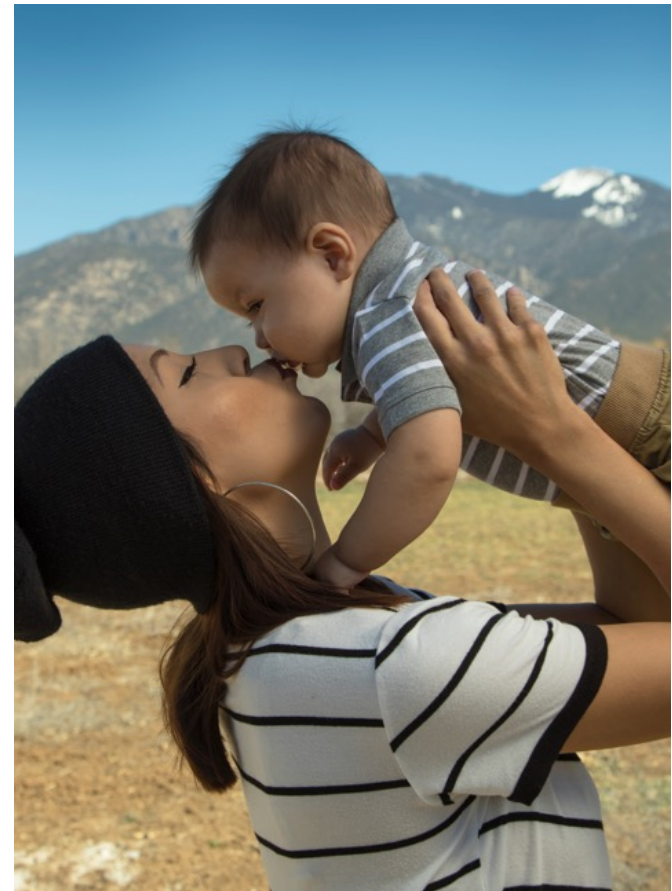


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Contact Information

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Thank you!

