



APA Public Interest Government Relations Office

Indians into Psychology Indian Health Service

The American Psychological Association (APA) urges Congress to provide an increase of \$750,000 to the Indians into Psychology (InPsych) program to permit a continuation and expansion of the Indian Health Service (IHS) program to a total of six sites. Currently, IHS funds three program sites at the University of North Dakota, the University of Montana, and Oklahoma State University. The recommended increase would permit the funding of three additional program sites. Due to the lack of a program site to serve the southwest and the Native Alaskan populations, APA urges that favorable consideration be given to establishing sites at Utah State University and the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The APA further recommends the inclusion of the following report language: *“The Committee has increased the allocation of the InPsych program by \$750,000 to permit the funding of six InPsych programs including those at the University of North Dakota, the University of Montana, Oklahoma State University, Utah State University, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks.”*

- The Indians into Psychology program was established to more effectively address the disproportionate prevalence of behavioral and mental health issues within the American Indian and Alaska Native populations.
- The InPsych Program addresses four major issues: 1) too few mental health professionals in Native American communities; 2) too few American Indians/Alaska Natives mental health professionals; 3) substandard availability of quality mental health services in Indian country; and 4) insufficient cross-training in mainstream psychology.
- Considerable disparities exist in the psychological well being of American Indians/Alaska Natives compared to the general population. In fact, American Indians tend to underutilize mental health services, experience higher therapy drop out rates and are less likely to respond to treatment.
- The suicide rate for American Indians is 60 percent higher than the general population. The highest suicide rate is found in American Indians ages 15-34, compared to ages 74 and older for the general population.
- Suicides are just the tip of the pyramid in examining suicidal behavior among American Indian youth. There are many more non-fatal injuries due to suicidal behavior than there are suicides. It is estimated that there are 13 non-fatal events for every fatality.
- The InPsych program is designed to recruit American Indian/Alaska Natives undergraduate students into psychology programs, and recruit and train American Indian graduate students into clinical psychology programs. The ultimate goal of the program is to increase the number of trained American Indian/Alaska Natives clinical psychologists to meet the disproportionate needs of the American Indian/Alaska Native population.
- Training and recruiting American Indians/Alaska Natives to provide behavioral and mental health services to reservations substantially increases the utilization rate of these services and improves their quality by assuring the provision of services by culturally competent trained professionals.

