

# Community Health Aide Program Readiness Assessment Project

## What is the Community Health Aide Program (CHAP)?

- CHAP is an Indian Health Service (IHS) program that educates and trains local providers to increase access to quality health care and health promotion in the fields of behavioral, dental, and primary health within their own American Indian/Alaska Native communities. CHAP can operate within Tribal or federally run facilities.
- CHAP began in Alaska in 1968. Since its inception, the program has proven effective for addressing health service delivery needs in rural Alaska Native villages.
- In 2010, under the permanent reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA), Congress authorized IHS to expand the program to the lower 48 states.
- IHS began consulting with Tribes on national expansion of CHAP in 2016. IHS formed the CHAP Tribal Advisory Group in 2018 to ensure Tribal leaders from all 12 IHS Areas provided critical input and feedback into the design of the national program.
- Learn more at <http://www.ihs.gov/chap>.

## How is CHAP different from the IHS Community Health Representative (CHR) program?

- CHAP professionals extend the work of providers offering direct patient care, while the CHR program addresses community-based needs associated with health care, such as transportation.
- The CHR program will continue to operate and is not affected by CHAP expansion. Tribes have expressed the importance of sustaining the CHR program across their communities.
- The IHCIA lists both Community Health Representatives and Community Health Aides among the Indian Health Professional Personnel types identified to increase the number of Native people entering health organizations and Urban Indian health programs (25 U.S.C. §1611).

### **CHAP** Community Health Aides

- Support and extend the work of senior medical, behavioral health, and dental providers
- Provide a higher level of services than Community Health Representatives and are more akin to mid-level providers (e.g., nurses, bachelor's-level mental health counselors)
- Receive a standardized curriculum and training

### **CHR** Community Health Representatives

- Provide individuals, families, and communities with the appropriate information to practice a healthy lifestyle
- Play a critical role in care coordination and case management
- Ensure health equity by addressing social determinants of health, including access to care, food, and medicine

## What is the CHAP Readiness Assessment Project (CHAPRAP)?

- CHAPRAP is a 2-year project that began in October 2020 to identify factors for Tribes to consider when deciding whether and when to implement CHAP. Activities include—



- The project will invite Tribal health leadership and staff from all 12 IHS Areas to test each piece of the toolkit as it is developed. This will ensure the tools are beneficial and user friendly for intended recipients.

## Who is leading CHAPRAP?

- The Office of Minority Health (OMH) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is funding CHAPRAP to support Tribes in successfully introducing CHAP. OMH's support stems from its commitment to promoting the sustainability and spread of effective policies, programs, and practices that improve health outcomes for American Indian/Alaska Native people.
- James Bell Associates (JBA) is the contractor leading CHAPRAP. Under OMH guidance, JBA will work closely with IHS and the CHAP Tribal Advisory Group in carrying out project tasks. Learn more about JBA's Tribal Evaluation practice at <http://www.jbassoc.com/tribal-evaluation>.

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