

# Tribal Public Health Departments: Exploring Roles, Perspectives, and Partnerships

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## Project team



National Indian  
Health Board



Alana Knudson, PhD, PI  
Michael Meit, MA, MPH  
Jessica Kronstadt, MPP

Angel Dotomain, MBA  
Aleena Hernandez, MPH,  
Co-PI

## Advisory Committee

- **Cathy Abramson**, Treasurer, Board Member, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians
- **Leslie Beitsch**, MD, JD, Associate Dean for Health Affairs, University of Florida, College of Medicine
- **Kaye Bender**, RN, PhD, FAAN, President and Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Accreditation Board
- **Ron Bialek**, MPP, President, Public Health Foundation
- **Stacy Bohlen**, Executive Director, NIHB
- **Trina Pyron**, MA, Public Health Advisor, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- **Ronald B. Demaray**, Associate Director, Self-Determination Services, Office of Direct Service and Contracting Tribes, HIS
- **Joe Finkbonner**, RPh, MHA, NIHB Board Member, Executive Director, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board
- **H. Sally Smith**, Chairman of the Board, Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation

## Background

- 565 Federally-recognized Tribes in 35 States
- Tribes are Sovereign Nations and exercise a government-to-government relationship with the U.S. Government
- Tribal Health Departments provide a broad range of public health and healthcare services
- Services are often provided alone or in partnership with various stakeholders, including
  - Tribe
  - Indian Health Service
  - Tribal Epidemiology Centers
  - State and local health departments
  - Other 3<sup>rd</sup> parties

## Overview

- NIHB released the 2010 Tribal Public Health Profile describing Tribal public health systems.
- While data on local and state health departments are gathered routinely, the NIHB Tribal Profile is the first
- Identifying opportunities to strengthen Tribal public health departments is particularly timely given the permanent reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act and public health accreditation

## Research Questions

- What public health services are Tribal public health departments providing?
- What proportion of Tribal public health departments has conducted a community health assessment (CHA) in the past three years?
- How can future efforts be improved to collect comparable Tribal public health department data?
- What types of technical assistance would be helpful to Tribal public health departments preparing for accreditation?

## Research Plan

- Analyze data from the NIHB Tribal Public Health Profile, and ASTHO and NACCHO profiles
- Gather additional qualitative information
  - Focus groups and discussions with Tribal health leaders who did and did not respond to the Capacity Assessment
  - Consultation with Advisory Committee
- Develop recommendations to strengthen future Tribal public health department data collection

# Preliminary Qualitative Findings

- Accreditation Pre-Requisites
  - Significant interest in process; inclusion of formal and informal assessment data, community engagement
  - All prerequisites are valuable; elements need to be clearly defined
- Areas of significant interest
  - Epidemiology and surveillance
  - Access to data; data sharing
  - Access to care
- Technical assistance needs – models, templates, and training
- Other: Over surveyed; centralize data collection with NIHB

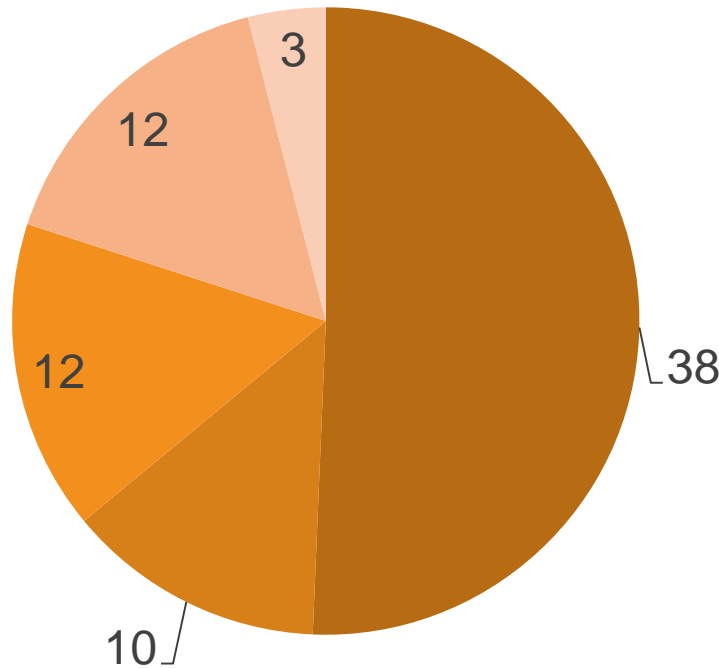


## Preliminary Quantitative Findings

- 79 Tribal public health department respondents
  - Relationship with IHS
    - 23 compact all IHS services
    - 34 contract one or more IHS service
    - 12 contract or compact IHS services through another tribe
    - 5 are direct service Tribes
    - 3 were unsure
  - Three-quarters of respondents serve populations of 10,000 or fewer
  - About half of respondents have 36 or fewer staff members

## Preliminary Quantitative Findings (cont.)

- Have you conducted a community health assessment within the last 3 years?



- No, it has been more than 3 years
- No, we have never conducted a community health assessment
- Yes, developed and facilitated by an outside party
- Yes, developed and led primarily by the THD/O
- Yes, developed by a coalition (group of partners) with our THD/O as the lead

## Next Steps

- Conduct second set of focus groups with Tribal public health department directors
  - Identify what activities and services fall under the purview of Tribal public health departments
  - Determine technical assistance needs to prepare for accreditation
- Complete quantitative analysis
- Harmonize the ASTHO and NACCHO profile findings with the NIHB profile findings
- Develop practice briefs and final report
- Disseminate findings to Tribal and public health stakeholders

## Contact Information

Alana Knudson, PhD

[knudson-alana@norc.org](mailto:knudson-alana@norc.org)

(301) 634-9326

Angel Dotomain, MBA

[edotomain@nihb.org](mailto:edotomain@nihb.org)

(202) 507-4070

Aleena Hernandez, MPH

[aleenamh@redstar1.org](mailto:aleenamh@redstar1.org)

(520) 407-6307