



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
Lynn Trujillo, Secretary
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New Mexico Indian Affairs Department Recognizes National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

SANTA FE, NM – September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Throughout the month, the Indian Affairs Department (IAD) is working to raise awareness and provide resources to the mental and behavioral health crisis our Native American communities face.

“Suicide is preventable; increasing our own knowledge and awareness of what to look for when someone may be struggling with depression or having thoughts of suicide is an important first step toward prevention,” said Cabinet Secretary Lynn Trujillo. “It is more important than ever that we continue to pay close attention to our relatives, especially during this difficult time of uncertainty. By creating a culture that’s smart about mental health, we can save lives.”

According to the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health](#), in 2019, suicide was the second leading cause of death for American Indian/Alaska Natives between the ages of 10 and 34. The overall death rate from suicide for American Indian/Alaska Native adults is about 20 percent higher compared to the non-Hispanic white population.

Over the past year, IAD has taken several actions to provide culturally appropriate suicide prevention assistance to our Tribal communities, including:

- Establishment of the inaugural [Indigenous Youth Council](#) (IYC)
 - In June 2021, the IAD and IYC convened Indigenous youth from across the state to acquire mental health-related resiliency tools and strategies and to identify mental health needs and priorities specific to Indigenous youth.
 - The IYC presented a Final Report and Recommendations to Governor Lujan Grisham, her cabinet, and Tribal Leadership during the State Tribal Leaders Summit.
 - Participated in the state’s Path to Wellness TV campaign.
- Partnered with UNM’s [Honoring Native Life](#) to host a suicide prevention training series for behavioral health providers in Tribal communities.
- Partnered with Harvard University to memorialize [New Mexico Tribal Behavioral and Mental Health Response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

- Participated in the Behavioral Health Collaborative and its advisory council, the Behavioral Health Planning Council. Through this work, IAD:
 - Co-Chaired the Native American Sub-Committee (NASC)
 - Administered funds for the five Native American -specific Local Collaboratives that include all Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos.
 - In the spring of 2021, IAD and NASC sponsored four youth mental health events in the Pueblo of Zuni, the Pueblo of Isleta, Jicarilla Apache Nation, and Mescalero Apache Tribe.

IAD continues to advocate for tribal behavioral health initiatives, including:

- Advocating for the establishment of the Native American Workgroup in the New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition.
- Co-sponsoring the establishment of the NM Tribal Behavioral Health Providers Association.
- Secured \$150,000 in reoccurring funding for suicide prevention efforts in the 2021 Legislative Session.
- Collaborated with the CYFD Office of Behavioral Health to fund tribal behavioral health initiatives in the Pueblo of Santo Domingo, Jicarilla Apache Nation, and with the New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition Native American Workgroup.

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For information about Septembers calendar of events go to <https://nmcrisisline.com/resources/wellness/> New Mexicans experiencing any kind of emotional crisis are encouraged to call the [New Mexico Crisis and Access Line](#) anytime at 1-855-NMCRISIS (662-7474) or download [NMConnect](#), a smartphone app, for immediate access to mental health professionals and resources.