

**Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities**

**American Indian Health Round Tables
Executive Summary & Recommendations**

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Office of Minority Health & Health Disparities
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The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Minority Health and Health Disparities (MHHD) intensified its efforts to obtain recommendations from American Indians in preparation of Maryland's Statewide Plan to Eliminating Minority Health Disparities. MHHD sponsored two American Indian Round Tables held December 2004 and November 2005. The recommendations below summarize comments generated from group discussion during the two round tables meeting. The number of participants at both meetings totaled 80.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CAPACITY BUILDING

- Increase financial funding for organizations working on health disparities
- Develop, publish and disseminate a resource guide specifically for American Indians
- Institute tools that promote and support networking amongst health care and service providers targeting American Indians
- Strengthen the infrastructure of community organizations such as the Baltimore American Indian Center
- Mentorship to strengthen the American Indian community
- Develop prevention programs for diabetes, nutrition, and alcohol abuse targeting American Indian youth who have an increased risk

CULTURAL AWARENESS

- Improve cultural sensitivity for American Indian in need of health and housing services
- Provide localized mental health service providers
- Improve understanding of Tribal, cultural, and language issues
- Develop or research medical models that incorporate the cultural and behavioral nuances of American Indians

DATA COLLECTION IMPROVEMENT

- Consider more effective methodologies for capturing and disseminating census data for American Indians; i.e. more events such as PowWows

- Improve data collection and reporting so that the American Indian population in Maryland is not undercounted
- Conduct a needs assessment to allow for self-identification of critical health issues and priorities

GOVERNMENTAL ACTION

- DHMH should evaluate the current regulations used to define minorities
- DHMH should work with the American Indian Council of Indian Chiefs and other groups to increase communications regarding health service needs and program availability
- Improve racial classification methods to decrease errors in racial designation on government documents
- A State bill is needed to recognize the American Indians indigenous to Maryland especially those tribes that meet federal recognition criteria