

2020

Adolescent Health Tribal Action Plan

A Strategic Plan for the Tribes of Idaho, Oregon, and
Washington



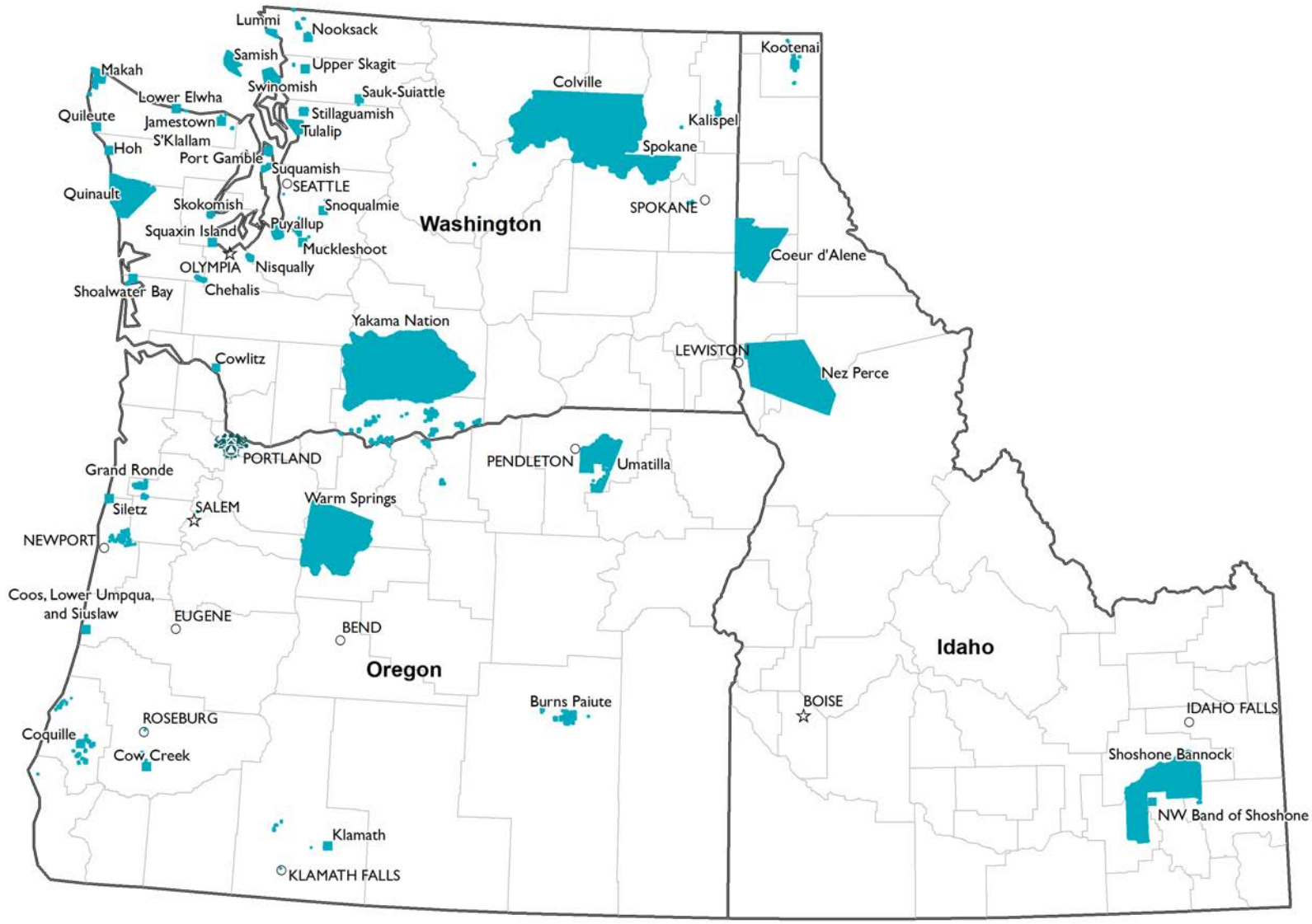




TABLE OF CONTENTS



	2020 ADOLESCENT HEALTH
	TRIBAL ACTION PLAN
4	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
5	VISION AND GOALS
5	MISSION STATEMENT
6	GUIDING PRINCIPLES
7	STRATEGIES THAT WORK: ADOLESCENT HEALTH PROMOTION
7	INCREASE PROTECTIVE FACTORS
8	DECREASE RISK FACTORS
8	SUPPORT THE FIVE ESSENTIALS
9	PRIORITY ADOLESCENT HEALTH TOPICS
10	NW TRIBAL ADOLESCENT HEALTH GOALS AND STRATEGIES
12	NPAIHB ACTIVITY SPOTLIGHTS
13	2020 PLANNING PROCESS
14	REFERENCES

Suggested Citation: 2020 Adolescent Health Tribal Action Plan: A Strategic Plan for the Tribes of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. NW Tribal Epidemiology Center, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, Portland, OR.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every parent, family, Tribe, and agency has the opportunity and responsibility to promote the health and wellbeing of the next generation.

In keeping with the mission of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB or the Board), the *Adolescent Health Tribal Action Plan* was first designed in 2014 to guide the development of programs and services to improve adolescent health within the 43 federally-recognized Tribes in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.⁵ As such, it can be used by program managers or public health professionals, as well as by tribal leaders and policy-makers, as they set the agenda for improving their community's health.

As a core value, the Board recognizes and supports tribal sovereignty and control over the design and delivery of public health programs and healthcare systems. The strategic goals and objectives in the action plan based not only on national, statewide, and regional data, but also on feedback from Northwest tribal health experts, including members of the NPAIHB's Youth Delegate council, tribal health advocates, tribal clinicians and behavior specialists, members of the Indian Health Service, staff from the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, and representatives from community- and tribally-based organizations.

The Adolescent Health Tribal Action Plan emphasizes:

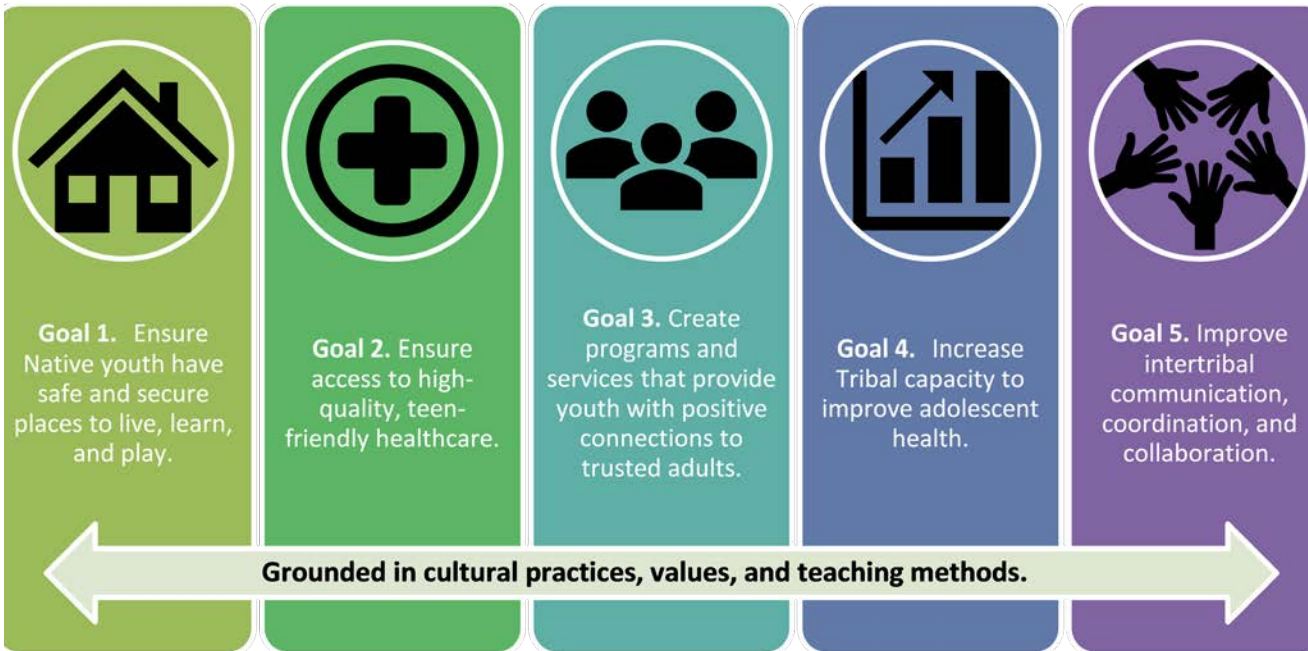
- Promoting adolescent health by developing culturally-appropriate programs and policies;
- Providing adolescents with the support, options, and resources they need to take control of their own health and wellbeing;
- Improving adolescent social and physical environments and increasing the role of schools and afterschool programs in improving young people's health;
- Strengthening inter-tribal and inter-agency collaboration across sectors to promote adolescent health;
- Increasing knowledge and understanding among tribal decision-makers, State Health Departments, and potential funding organizations about adolescent health issues that affect Native people in the Pacific Northwest, as well as effective solutions.

It is our hope that this plan will be used by the Board, NW Tribes, and partnering agencies to guide program planning, catalyze community outreach efforts, and foster a coordinated response to addressing the health and wellbeing of adolescents in our tribal communities. Adolescent health is deeply affected by the social conditions that surround them, therefore we aim to encourage collaboration across agencies and programs (i.e. cultural and art programs, health and wellness, recreation, prevention, education, juvenile justice, elders, social services, etc.) and integrate preventive services for Native youth across the Pacific Northwest.



VISION AND GOALS

Native youth in the Pacific Northwest will meet their full potential - with health, safety, and success.



MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to encourage Native adolescents and young adults to realize and embrace their full potential for health and development, and to enhance the capacity of NW Tribes to promote adolescent health, safety, and wellbeing.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Good health can provide adolescents with a strong foundation for adult health. Some adolescents' unsafe choices or vulnerable situations can have serious life-threatening consequences. Alternatively, when young people are supported in making positive choices, the benefits to the individual and community are significant, because many life-long patterns are established during adolescence. For these reasons, we believe that addressing the health and wellbeing of Native young people is imperative.

Youth-Driven. Programs, services, and interventions aimed at adolescents are likely to have a more significant impact if they are developed with the involvement of young people. Young people are experts on their own beliefs, values, and behaviors, as well as those of their peers. For this reason, this plan includes young people from rural, reservation, and urban communities to help ensure that health and wellness programs and services are sensitive to their diverse needs and concerns.

Culturally-Appropriate. When designing culturally-appropriate strategies to promote adolescent health, we will incorporate NW American Indian/ Alaska Native (AI/AN) community norms, beliefs, values, teachings, and traditions (including language, arts, music, and traditional healing practices), and will utilize traditional teaching methods and learning styles (including storytelling, role modeling, intergenerational teaching, and experiential learning).

Holistic. This plan recognizes the intersecting importance of physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual health, and seeks to promote balance within each of these domains.

Prevention focused. The leading causes of illness and death among adolescents are largely preventable² and young people's behaviors are influenced at the individual, peer, family, school, community, and societal levels. As such, successful interventions must acknowledge the full range of conditions, circumstances, and factors impacting the health and wellbeing of adolescents and young adults.

Honoring the Past. We envision our seventh generation living in communities that are blessed with good health- unencumbered by health disparities and violence. To achieve this vision, our young people must be taught their traditions and local initiatives must incorporate cultural values that will sustain and heal our communities. By honoring our past, learning our traditions, and encouraging intergenerational engagement, we believe that young people will learn the values that will help them keep steady and find the balance required of a healthy and happy life.



STRATEGIES THAT WORK: ADOLESCENT HEALTH PROMOTION

Extensive research on adolescent health provides a wealth of information about strategies that can support the health and wellbeing of youth. Each of these strategies have been shown to improve the health and wellbeing of adolescents:



INCREASE PROTECTIVE FACTORS

It is well recognized that many factors, conditions, and circumstances impact young people’s health and development. Because adolescents and young adults are still developing, they are particularly sensitive to social and environmental influences.² Adolescent behaviors are particularly influenced by:

- parents and families
- health care systems
- peers
- media
- neighborhoods and communities
- schools
- social norms
- community organizations
- government, policies, and laws
- faith communities¹⁰

These factors affect young people’s capacity to withstand life stressors and their ability to make decisions about healthy behavior.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, strategies designed to grow young people’s resiliency via one or more of these change agents can be highly effective in advancing the health and wellbeing of young people.



DECREASE RISK FACTORS

Certain behaviors are known to negatively affect the health of adolescents, particularly:

- Behaviors that result in unintentional and intentional injury (including violence or suicide)
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Tobacco or e-cigarette use
- Sexual behaviors that result in unintended pregnancy, HIV infection, and other sexually transmitted infections
- Unhealthy diet or poor access to nutritious foods
- Inadequate physical activity⁹

Many of these behaviors are interrelated. As a result, it is imperative that we develop cross-cutting strategies to promote healthy behavior among Native youth, by exploring community and environmental conditions that impact health, as well as individual factors that make unhealthy behavior seem attractive.

SUPPORT THE FIVE ESSENTIALS

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has identified five essential components of adolescent health :

Positive connections with supportive people: Adolescents crave safe, stable, and nurturing relationships with supportive adults, whether with parents, coaches, neighbors, grandparents, relatives, teachers, older adults in the community, program leaders, or mentors.

Safe and secure places to live, learn, and play: Safe and supportive places such as schools, neighborhoods, communities, and healthy environments foster and support healthy adolescent development across the spectrum, including physical and mental health, social interactions, and cognitive growth. Adolescents also benefit from safe places to congregate and just “hang out.”

Access to high-quality, teen-friendly healthcare: Adolescents benefit from access to high-quality medical and dental care, mental and behavioral health services, and to healthcare providers who understand and value adolescents. Services that are youth-friendly, culturally-competent, affordable, convenient, and confidential are preferred by young patients.

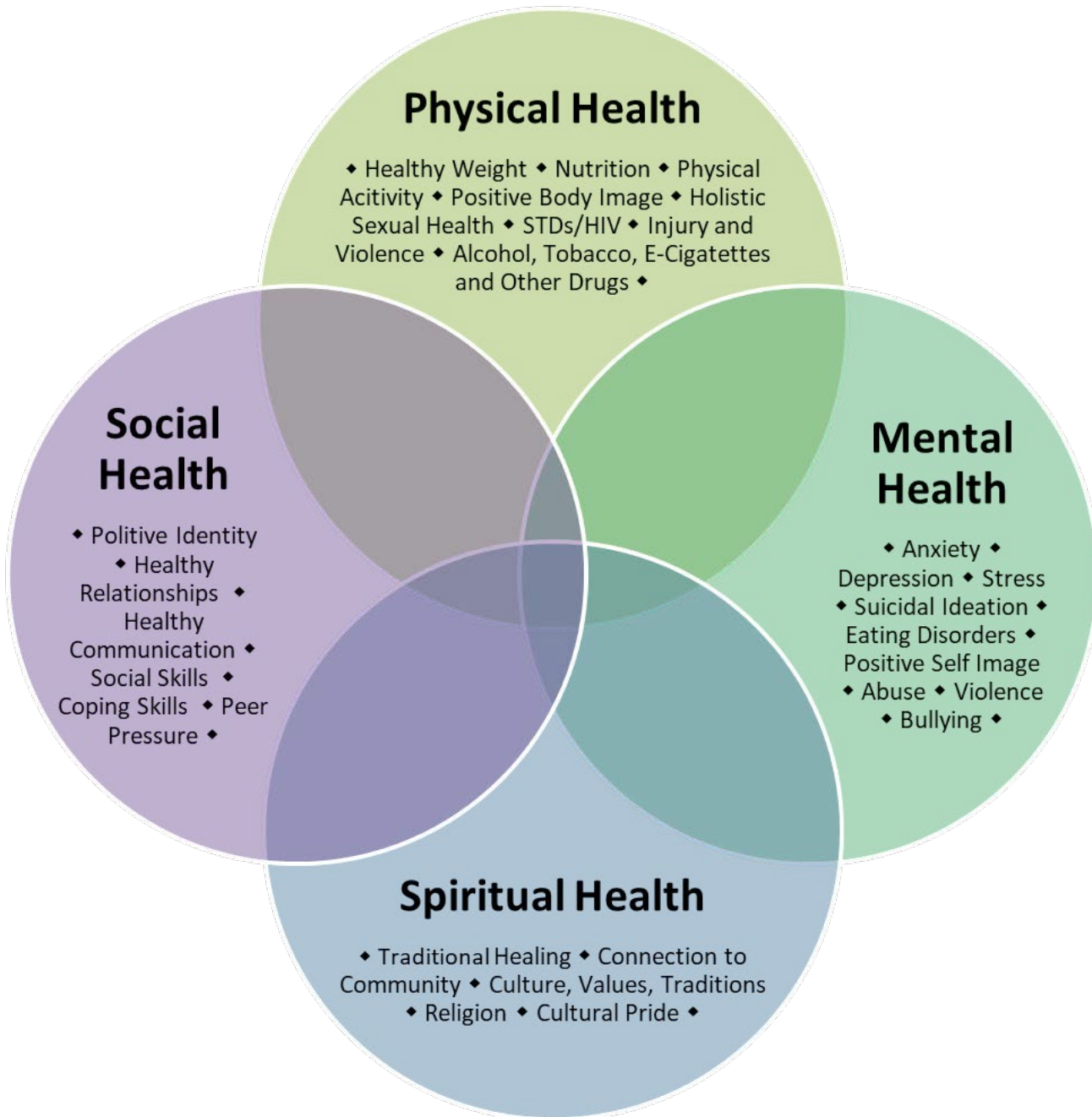
Opportunities for teens to engage as learners, leaders, team members, and workers: Active youth involvement with people and programs is important for promoting healthy adolescent development. This includes activities at school, home, or in the community, such as school clubs, sports, music, the arts, or out-of-school time programs, jobs, or activities at places of worship.



SUPPORT THE FIVE ESSENTIALS CONT.

Coordinated, adolescent- and family-centered services, as needed: Adolescents enter service systems at multiple points and places. Integrated and coordinated services can help ensure better health outcomes and support healthy development for adolescents. Unfortunately, the systems for providing services and supports to adolescents are often fragmented, spread across government agencies, nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers, businesses, and faith-based organizations. There is a clear benefit from a more coherent, integrated approach to fostering health and healthy development for adolescents.

PRIORITY ADOLESCENT HEALTH TOPICS





NW TRIBAL ADOLESCENT HEALTH GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1. Ensure Native young adults have safe and secure places to live, learn, and play.

- Invest in safe schools, wellness centers, clinics, homes, and other social service programs.
- Create policies and protocols and train staff and gatekeepers to provide safe spaces for teens and young adults (i.e. bullying-free, free of racism/microaggressions, access to Gay Straight Alliance Clubs (GSAs) and other resources for LGBTQ and Two Spirit youth).

Goal 2. Ensure youth have access to high-quality, teen-friendly health services.

- Support the NW Tribes in their development of teen-friendly health services.
- Connect AI/AN adolescents and young adults to health services that are youth-specific and culturally-appropriate. Increase awareness among AI/AN adolescents and their families about how to access available health services.
- Develop and disseminate multimedia health resources (using the Internet, texting, social networking, videos, and print materials) to connect AI/AN adolescents to medically-accurate, culturally-appropriate health information.
- Develop and disseminate social marketing campaigns for AI/AN adolescents and young adults that address priority health topics.

Goal 3. Create programs and services that provide youth with positive connections to trusted adults.

- Offer programs and services that cultivate communication and intergenerational learning (including: activities that pass along cultural teachings, We R Native's Ask Auntie/Uncle Q&A service, and tools and resources to support trusted adults, parents and caregivers).
- Prepare AI/AN adolescents and young adults to take an active role in their own health and wellbeing by offering leadership training, career coaching, Youth Delegates and Youth Councils, mentorship and internship opportunities, community service, and other positive extracurricular activities.



NW TRIBAL ADOLESCENT HEALTH GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 4. Increase Tribal capacity to improve adolescent health.

- Connect NW Tribes to capacity building assistance (training, technical assistance, technology transfer) to improve tribal access to and use of culturally-appropriate, adolescent health policies, programs, and services.
- Identify and disseminate information about effective, culturally-appropriate adolescent health policies, programs, and services using email, listservs, the www.HealthyNativeYouth.org website, monthly Community of Practice webinars, articles, fact sheets, and regional trainings and meetings. Include information on effective prevention strategies, screening tools, treatment options, policy templates, funding opportunities, and related resources.
- Provide NW Tribes with access to solid and reliable adolescent health data to guide program planning, delivery, and ongoing program monitoring, including:
 1. demographic and behavioral data
 2. morbidity and mortality data
 3. information on health risk and protective factors
 4. data assessing regional adolescent health promotion capacity and readiness levels
 5. take steps to correct racial misclassification
- When culturally-appropriate tools or interventions are not available, develop, adapt and evaluate new adolescent health interventions designed specifically for AI/AN youth in the Pacific Northwest.

Goal 5. Improve inter-tribal communication, coordination, and collaboration.

- Support cross-program communication, coordination, collaboration, and policy-change to promote priority adolescent health topics. Actively engage tribal staff (both within and external to the healthcare sector) including, tribal council members, law enforcement personnel, school boards, educators and school administrators, and other key community stakeholders. Use these forums to discuss local concerns, possible solutions, and share available resources.
- Develop the mechanisms and opportunities to collect and share data and information across-program partners, including best practices, challenges, and lessons learned to inform decision-makers about adolescent health.
- Facilitate collaborative activities among Tribes and appropriate youth-serving agencies through NPAIHB Quarterly Board Meetings, Alliance meetings, conference calls, webinars, and email.
- Collaborate with Idaho, Oregon, and Washington State Health Departments, Mental Health Departments, and Juvenile Justice Programs to improve tribal access to state programs and services.





NPAIHB ACTIVITY SPOTLIGHTS

NPAIHB Youth Delegates. The NPAIHB Tribal Youth Delegate program is a year-long initiative for young Native American leaders working toward health equity in their communities. The program connects emerging Native leaders from Idaho, Oregon and Washington to people, institutions, and other resources that can amplify Youth Delegate's voices within broader movements.

Annual THRIVE Youth Conference. This annual summer conference is for Native youth 13-19 years old. The goal of this conference is to provide youth with *positive protective factors* (i.e. creative self-expression, healthy coping skills) that builds culture pride/resilience in themselves and learn new skills to take back to their communities. Participants attend 4-5 interactive workshop tracks that incorporate AI/AN culture, traditional learning strategies, and skill-building activities the educate youth about healthy decision-making.

We R Native is a multimedia health resource for Native teens and young adults (www.weRnative.org). The service includes an interactive website (weRnative.org), a text messaging service (Text NATIVE to 97779), social media, and print marketing materials. Special features include monthly contests, community service grants (\$475), and an "Ask Auntie/ Uncle" Q&A service.



The text messaging service includes several health promotion campaigns with national reach:

- Text NATIVE to 97779
- Text SEX to 97779
- Text FITNESS to 97779
- Text STEM to 97779
- Text BRAVE to 97779 (models help-seeking skill) = over 1,000 enrollees

Healthy Native Youth is a one-stop-shop for educators and health advocates who want to expand learning opportunities for AI/AN youth (www.HealthyNativeYouth.org). The site contains curricula, quizzes, handouts and training tools needed to access and deliver effective, age-appropriate sexual health programs, and monthly Community of Practice topical calls.



The **IDEA-NW Project** improves the quality of race data for American Indians and Alaska Natives by carrying out record linkages with health data systems in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. The project works to correct inaccurate race data in cancer registries, hospital discharge systems, trauma registries, vital statistics, and STD/HIV systems. They then analyze and disseminate AI/AN health data in ways that are locally meaningful to improve tribal health planning.





2020 PLANNING PROCESS

The Adolescent Health Tribal Action Plan is designed for the 43 federally-recognized Tribes and urban health centers in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. It is the product of a collaborative planning process, initiated by the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board and members of the *Northwest Native Adolescent Health Alliance*, an inclusive, multi-functional group that meets quarterly in OR, WA, and ID to discuss cross-cutting prevention strategies targeting Native teens and young adults.

The overarching mission, vision, guiding principles, and objectives of the plan were first developed in 2014 and was updated 2019. The planning process involved multiple phases, beginning with the review of adolescent health data and the identification of factors that influence the health and development of Native youth. To inform the planning process, the team gathered data from NPAIHB tribal delegates, community members, behavioral health representatives and others that work with tribal youth regarding current services available that address adolescent health, as well as the need for additional adolescent health services. Once the community assessment was complete, their feedback was used by the planning team to select and design strategies that were responsive to the current level of community readiness and capacity within the NW Tribes.

The plan was reviewed by the delegates of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board. A resolution supporting the plan's implementation was unanimously passed in January 2020.





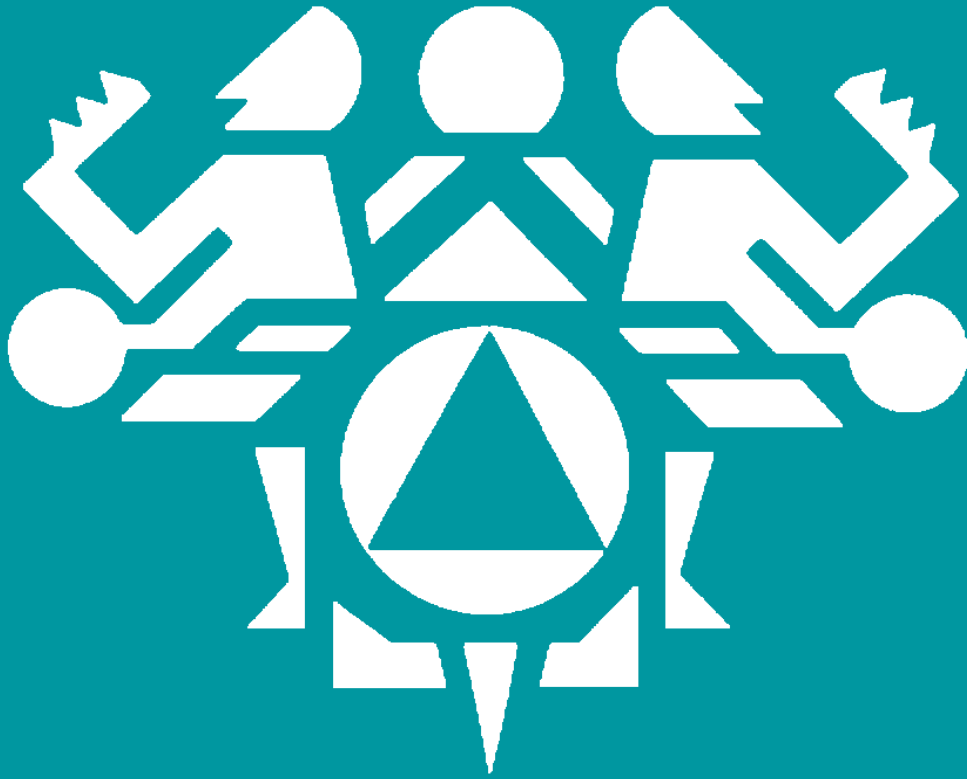
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¹ Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow® (TAG) **TAG Toolkit** (PDF, 12 pages).







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