

January 16, 2003

Tribal Self-Governance Health and Human Services Evaluation Feasibility Study

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, DHHS, has funded a one-year project to assemble background information and to assess the availability of data and the feasibility of conducting an evaluation of the effectiveness and impacts of administering and managing health and/or other social service programs under Self-Governance. The primary tasks that will be conducted by Westat and its subcontractors, Project HOPE and Kauffman and Associates, Inc., include:

- Compilation and synthesis of background information and existing research on the legislative history, experience, and effectiveness of Tribal Self-Governance, including identification of gaps in the research and limitations of previous studies.
- Identification of a sample group of Self-Governance Tribes that meet specific criteria, management and data capabilities sufficient to support an evaluation of Tribally-managed programs, and indicating an interest in/willingness to participate in an evaluation.
- Identification of likely research questions for an evaluation and the data that would be required to address each question.
- Assessment of data availability, completeness, and comparability for Tribally-managed programs, relative to data that are available from Federal and State agencies that provide services to non Self-Governance Tribes.
- Consultation and ongoing communication with Tribal leaders and Tribal organizations in designing, conducting, and reviewing findings of the feasibility study.

A Technical Working Group (TWG), consisting of 10 Tribal leaders, directors of Tribally-managed programs, representatives of Tribal organizations (plus informal, ex officio, research and data experts) will advise the project on key issues and review interim and final project findings.

This study extends work begun by IHS (under the now-repealed Section 305 of ISDEAA, including the Baseline Measures Workgroup) and, more recently, grew out of the experience of DHHS' participation in the Federal-Tribal consultation on Title VI of P.L. 106-260 that mandated a study of the feasibility of conducting a demonstration of Tribal Self-Governance of non-IHS programs. Since evaluation would be a part of a demonstration, and since there has been no conclusive evaluation of Tribal Self-Governance of health programs, the current study will provide information relevant to the possible conduct of an evaluation of Tribal Self-Governance of either health or social services programs, or both.

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