



Partnership to Support Depression Programming

American Indian Health and Family Services of Southeastern Michigan and San Diego American Indian Health Center

To promote collaboration within the national Urban Indian Health Organizations (UIHOs) network and increase service capacity at Urban Indian Health Organizations, the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) has led a yearly facilitated partnership between two UIHOs as part of the [Promoting Health Equity project](#) supported by the Office of Minority Health. Each year the partnership focuses on strengthening services for a health topic that the UIHOs identified as priorities for their communities. This year's partnership, between [American Indian Health and Family Services of Southeastern Michigan \(AIHFS\)](#) and the [San Diego American Indian Health Center \(SDAIHC\)](#), focused on depression programming.



The seven month partnership consisted of an introductory teleconference, an organizational readiness, assessment and concluded with a one-day strategic planning workshop hosted by AIHFS in Detroit. This collaboration brought together administrators, providers, and clinical staff from AIHFS and SDAIHC to share lessons and concerns experienced within their depression programs to inform innovative strategies to address depression program change.

Lessons shared at the strategic planning meeting include:

- Patient/community needs assessments are critical to determine administrative action.
- Quality Improvement studies can lead to increased program utilization.
- Creating and implementing community feedback policies and procedures creates trust between the provider and client.
- Universal patient screening for depression improves client identification, program utilization, and overall quality of care.
- Buy-in from all levels of staff, from direct service providers to administration is crucial to successful program change implementation.
- Academic partnerships can facilitate program change by introducing fresh perspectives and new program funding opportunities.

In follow-up interviews, both UIHOs indicated that the partnership and strategic planning activities were influential in determining the next steps for their behavioral health departments. For AIHFS, the biggest impact was the realization that they needed to take a few steps back and conduct an assessment to determine the needs of their patient population. AIHFS staff have presented their strategic plans to their community advisory council and used internal conversations to apply for a grant to support the needs assessment. SDAIHC would also like to get a better sense of the needs of its community and staff, though a community needs assessment and an annual employee satisfaction survey.

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Their goal is to increase communication and understanding between administrators, staff, and the community. This holistic approach creates universal buy-in for all stakeholders to give program change the greatest chance of success. SDAIHC is also hoping to pursue academic partners to increase resources and help with program development. This holistic approach creates universal buy-in for all stakeholders to give program change the greatest chance of success. SDAIHC is also hoping to pursue academic partners to increase resources and help with program development.

The UIHI would like to thank AIHFS and SDAIHC for their participation. We would also like to thank the staff of AIHFS for their generous hospitality. If you have any questions about other outcomes from this partnership please e-mail us at info@uihi.org.