

## **What is a Tribal Community Health Assessment?**

A community health assessment (sometimes called a CHA), also known as community health needs assessment, refers to a state, tribal, local, or territorial health assessment that identifies key health needs and issues through systematic, comprehensive data collection and analysis. Community Health Assessments are a collaborative process for gathering information to inform priority setting and health improvement planning, resource development and allocation, advocacy, and many other Health Program efforts. Tribal community health assessments present an opportunity for the tribe to look at American Indian specific issues and areas of concern.

The ultimate goal of a tribal community health assessment is to develop strategies to address the community's health needs and identified challenges while honoring cultural practices. A variety of tools and processes may be used to conduct a community health assessment; the essential ingredients are community engagement and collaborative participation.

## **What is a Community Health Improvement Plan?**

A community health improvement plan (or CHIP) is a long-term, systematic effort to address public health problems based on the results of community health assessment activities and the community health improvement process. A plan is typically updated every three to five years.

This plan is used by health and other education and human service agencies, in collaboration with community partners, to set priorities and coordinate and target resources. A community health improvement plan is critical for developing policies and defining actions to target efforts that promote health. It should define the vision for the health of the community through a collaborative process and should address the gamut of strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities that exist in the community to improve the health status of that community.

## **Why Complete an Assessment and Improvement Plan?**

A community health assessment gives organizations comprehensive information about the community's current health status, needs, and issues. This information can help develop a community health improvement plan by justifying how and where resources should be allocated to best meet community needs.

## **Benefits include**

- Improved organizational and community coordination and collaboration
- Support data-based decision making in health improvement planning and inform health program development, resource allocation, and evaluation
- Enhance what is already known or improve understanding of community health issues
- Encourages community involvement in health issues and engages key stakeholders
- Increased knowledge about public health and the interconnectedness of activities
- Strengthened partnerships within state and local public health systems
- Identified strengths and weaknesses to address in quality improvement efforts
- Baselines on performance to use in preparing for public health accreditation or writing grants
- The findings will be utilized by tribal leaders and health professionals
- Inform critical decisions
- Prioritize health issues

- Reference when submitting proposals or applications for grants
- Track and identify important trends on significant health issues over a period of time