

AIHFS Welcomes New Executive Director

American Indian Health and Family Services of Southeast Michigan, a non-profit urban Indian health center welcomed Ashley Tuomi as their New Executive Director this week. Ms Tuomi comes to the Detroit area from Los Angeles, where she was the Associate Director of Health Services for the United American Indian Involvement, Inc.

Detroit, MI, February 21, 2012— Ashley Tuomi is the new Executive Director for American Indian Health and Family Services. Ms Tuomi is a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in Oregon. She comes to AIHFS from United American Indian Involvement in Los Angeles where she served as the Associate Director of Health Services. Her experience included national RPMS training for Urban Indian Clinics, quality improvement, policy revisions, grant writing, and program development. Ms. Tuomi also served as the Executive Director for a tribal consortium clinic.

“I grew up in a military family, traveling around the United States. When I returned to Oregon, I became very involved with my tribe and tribal royalty. Having seen many areas of the Nation, and then coming home, it was apparent to me that there was a significant discrepancy and lack in the healthcare available to American Indians. It became a passion of mine to try to improve that situation,” said Ms Tuomi.

Fewer than 90 physicians typically serve 100,000 American Indians, compared with 229 per 100,000 people nationally.¹ Research also shows that Native Americans are 770 percent more likely to die from alcoholism, 650 percent more likely to die from tuberculosis, 420 percent more likely to die from diabetes, 280 percent more likely to die from accidents, and 52 percent more likely to die from pneumonia or influenza than other Americans, including white and minority populations.²

Ms. Tuomi received a Master of Health Policy and Administration from Washington State University, interning with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention working with American Indian/Alaska Native grantees. She said, “During my internship, I became particularly interested in improving the health of the urban Indian population. I’m thrilled to be here in Detroit, where AIHFS has done wonderful things, and to have the opportunity to further that work.”

Jerilyn Church, former Executive Director for AIHFS, will become the New Executive Director of the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen’s Health Board. Ms Church said, “I have incredible love and respect for the group of dedicated people who make up AIHFS, and I was extremely grateful that Ashley Tuomi accepted the position as Executive Director. Her enthusiasm for improving the healthcare experience of the American Indian/Alaska Natives here in southeast Michigan will help AIHFS achieve great strides forward.”

Ms Tuomi added, “One of the great things about AIHFS is that Indians from many tribes around the United States have settled here and use our services. I am excited that I will have the opportunity to meet other Natives from around the country and to learn the culture and customs of other tribes.”

American Indian Health and Family Services is a non-profit urban Indian health center serving the American Indian community of Southeastern Michigan. They offer comprehensive, culturally-integrated health care by providing medical and behavioral health services and health education services, in addition to outpatient substance abuse treatment and prevention programs. These services are open to persons with or without insurance. They also have an active youth program, provide health and wellness programs, and sponsor community events.

Contact:

Nickole Fox

Director of Health Education and Prevention

American Indian Health & Family Services

4880 Lawndale Street

Detroit, MI 48210

313.846.3718, ext. 1212

Cell: 313-670-7092

www.aihfs.org

Intercultural Cancer Council. American Indians/Alaska Natives and cancer. [cited 2009 Sep 1]. Available from: URL: <http://iccnetwork.org/cancerfacts/ICC-CFS2.pdf>.

²Commission Civil Rights (U.S.) *Native American health care disparities briefing: executive summary*. Washington: Commission on Civil Rights; 2004. Available from: URL: <http://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/usccr/documents/nativeamericanhealthcaresdis.pdf>