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MEN'S HEALTH NETWORK APPLAUDS CREATION OF OFFICE OF INDIAN MEN'S HEALTH

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 26, 2010) – The creation of the Office of Indian Men's Health to complement the existing Office of Indian Women's Health within the Indian Health Service is a momentous achievement and important step toward improving the health of American Indian men and their loved ones. Men's Health Network (MHN) is thrilled that this essential health initiative was included in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCA) which was made permanent on March 23, 2010 when President Obama signed the bill as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

"We need to find the most effective ways to promote healthy lifestyles and choices among all groups of Americans," U.S. Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) said. "I applaud the efforts behind the creation of this new Office of Indian Men's Health, and hope that it will serve as a model for future endeavors as we work to raise disease awareness and increase prevention initiatives throughout our society."

"The creation of the Office of Indian Men's Health underscores the overwhelming need to address the health status of American Indian and Alaskan Native men," said Daniel Molina, MD, Assistant Medical Director at the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic. "Cultural forces and the often stoic nature of men in our community frequently results in the ignoring of symptoms and a reluctance to seek medical care until treatable conditions are in their end stages. We must continue to improve the access to care for these men and address disease prevention with focuses on blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol control, depression and prostate cancer screening."

"The Office of Indian Men's Health will raise awareness about male health issues in the Native American community, and ways to prevent and detect men's health problems. The result will be more men getting the treatment needed and lives will be saved," said Congressman Tim Murphy (R-PA). "For too long the health needs of all men have gone unaddressed. This Office is a step towards men's health taking its rightful place in our federal government's healthcare priorities." Congressman Murphy is co-chair of the Congressional Men's Health Caucus.

"Increased emphasis on the health of American Indian and Alaska Native men will help to reduce access to care disparities and focus on prevention of chronic diseases like cancer,

(more)

when the disease is easier to treat and survive," said Michael H. Trujillo, MD, MPH, American Cancer Society Great West Division Board Director. "This critical initiative gives men – often the guideposts in the community – the ability to set a powerful example about the importance of being proactive about health."

American Indian/Alaska Natives suffer from alarming health disparities in health behaviors, chronic disease and mortality rates. For example, they are twice as likely to have diabetes as Caucasians. American Indian/Alaska Native men are more likely to smoke and to be obese than their white, African American and Asian counterparts.¹

"It's an exciting time for American Indian and Alaskan Native men as well as all men and their families nationwide," said Scott T. Williams, Vice President, Men's Health Network. "We look forward to the day when there will be an Office of Men's Health at each of the federal agencies addressing the health of American families."

About Men's Health Network

Men's Health Network, established in 1992, is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to reach men and their families where they live, work, play, and pray. For more information visit www.menshealthnetwork.org and follow MHN on Twitter: @MensHlthNetwork

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¹ Health Characteristics of the American Indian and Alaska Native Adult Population: United States, 1999–2003. CDC Advance Data. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ad/ad356.pdf>