



HEALTHY MINDS
POLICY INITIATIVE

Behavioral Health and Indian Country: Access to Care in Oklahoma

With Oklahoma having the second-highest proportion of American Indian residents in the U.S., the mental health and wellness of its Native populations are key to overall population health. Moreover, a significant portion of Oklahoma's mental health and addiction treatment occurs in tribal health systems.

INDIAN COUNTRY & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

2.5x

Native youth have a **suicide rate 2.5 times higher than the overall national average.**

1 in 5

AI/ANs who receive services through ODMHSAS are diagnosed with **depression.**

84%

The percent of Native women who will experience **violence in their lifetime.**

Mental health issues are often a **culturally-unique** experience for Native peoples. Historical oppression, including the forced removal of many Indigenous people from their homes and the theft of Native land, as well as continued **systemic oppression**, has resulted in many Natives experiencing poverty, trauma, and disenfranchisement. This has led to both socioeconomic and **health challenges** for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities.

WHERE PEOPLE RECEIVE CARE

51%

The percent of Native people in OK with **private insurance.**

376,000

The number of active Indian Health Service patients in Oklahoma.

17%

The percent of OK's **Medicaid** recipients that identify as AI/AN.

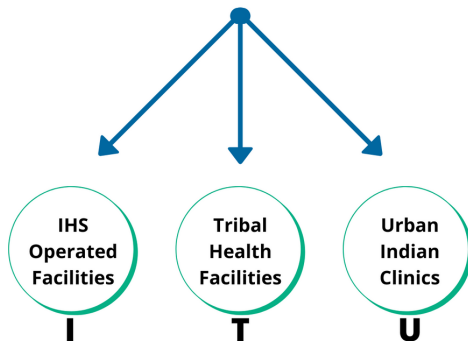
IHS is **not insurance** but rather the system used by the United States to provide mandated health care services to members of **federally-recognized tribes**. This commitment grew out of the establishment of treaties between the federal government and tribal nations. Tribal nations are **sovereign**, meaning each tribe has a centralized government and the right to govern itself and its citizens.

IHS BASICS & BACKGROUND

Indian Health Service (IHS), a federal agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, is responsible for providing federal health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN). IHS serves approximately 2.6 million members of 574 federally recognized tribes in 37 states.

IHS STRUCTURE

Indian Health Services supports three types of healthcare facilities:

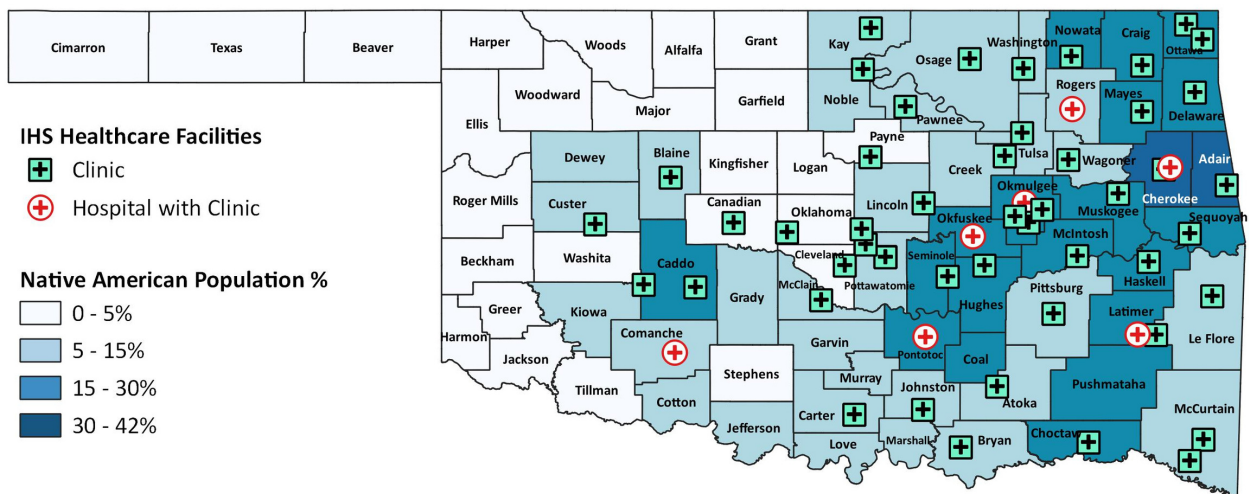


Legal Milestones for AI/AN Federal Services

- The Snyder Act (1921) gave Congress authority to use funds for the care of AI/ANs.
- The Indian Self-Determination & Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) (1975) recognized the importance of tribal sovereignty and decision-making in tribal affairs.
- The Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCA) (1976) implemented federal responsibility for the care of AI/ANs by improving health programs.
- In 1992, the ISDEAA was amended to give tribes the option for self-governance compacts to gain more autonomy in the management and delivery of their health care programs.

IHS IN OKLAHOMA

In Oklahoma, there are currently 60 I/T/U clinics and 8 I/T/U hospitals. Many of these providers have behavioral health services on site. IHS emphasizes the connection between mental and physical health, recognizing the need for integrated care. Services may include individual counseling, group therapy, case management, substance abuse treatment and suicide prevention efforts.



It is important to note that not all Native people are enrolled with their tribe and/or utilize IHS. Questions related to available health services should be directed to the provider nearest you.



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Building community capacity in Oklahoma to address treatable mental illness and addiction through local systems change and statewide policy work.

SOURCES: WWW.HEALTHYMINDSPOLICY.ORG/INDIAN-COUNTRY