



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
Lynn Trujillo, Secretary
Nadine Padilla, Deputy Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 11, 2021

Sherrie Catanach, Public Relations
Sherrie.Catanach2@state.nm.us
(505) 469-7599

**New Mexico Indian Affairs Department
Announces 2021 Indigenous Youth Wellness
Summit
June 11-12, 2021**

SANTA FE – In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) on Tuesday announced the 2021 Indigenous Youth Wellness Summit, "Community Resilience: Nurturing and Protecting Youth Wellness." Planned in collaboration with Honoring Native Life and the IAD inaugural Indigenous Youth Council (IYC), the Summit will convene Indigenous youth from across the state to acquire mental health-related resiliency tools and strategies and identify mental health needs and priorities particular to Indigenous youth. The Virtual Summit is scheduled for June 11-12, 2021 and open to participants ages 16-25.

"Now more than ever, we must prioritize mental health and continue to work together to combat the stigma surrounding our emotional well-being – particularly in indigenous communities," said Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham. "Through the work of the Indigenous Youth Council, we can help empower tribal youth and communities to support each other as we heal and recover from an incredibly challenging year."

"The burden of living through a pandemic continues to impact our tribal communities in unprecedented ways, especially for our youth. The Indigenous Youth Council will work to develop resources that will help our youth improve their mental health and increase their resiliency," said IAD Secretary Lynn Trujillo. "The time is now to come together to improve mental health for all New Mexicans."

In early 2021, the IAD and the Indigenous Youth Council partnered with Honoring Native Life to develop and execute a statewide wellness Summit. Created in 2011,

Honoring Native Life serves as a clearinghouse for Native American suicide prevention and is housed at the University of New Mexico Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Division of Community Behavioral Health. The clearinghouse provides culturally appropriate suicide prevention assistance to the state's Native American community and has historically held annual suicide prevention conferences for youth.

The Indigenous Youth Wellness Summit results from numerous calls by Tribal leadership and youth to improve access to behavioral and mental health services and resources both in and outside of Tribal communities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, access to these resources has been stifled by limited broadband capacity as most services transitioned to telehealth platforms. As New Mexico begins its recovery, the Summit will serve as a catalyst in making instrumental change for Indigenous youth and their holistic wellness.

"2020 was a struggle, but 2021 is a time to heal. The Youth Wellness Summit aims to use our Indigenous Knowledge Systems as a way to heal and restore our interbeing as Native people. Please join us as we begin to rebuild our tribal communities through youth empowerment," said Triston Black, Navajo Nation, IYC Member.

"The mental wellbeing of Native youth is so important. We must work together to destigmatize mental health issues and provide Native youth with access to culturally competent mental health resources. Please join us as we start the process of healing and building relationships that will help to empower our tribal youth and communities," said Trinity Roybal, Pueblo of Pojoaque, IYC Member.

For more information on the 2021 Indigenous Youth Wellness Summit, please visit www.iad.state.nm.us or email at iad.iyc@state.nm.us.

###

