

## Financing and Sustainability of American Indian and Alaska Native Systems of Care

March 3, 2009  
Tampa, Florida

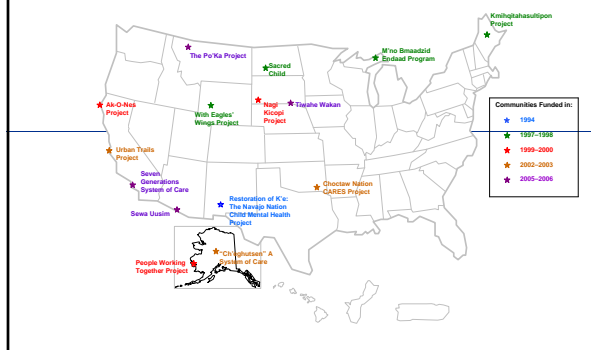
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## Tribal System of Care Communities

- 15 American Indian and Alaska Native (Tribal) communities funded from 1994 to 2006
- Distinct and unique cultures, history, and approaches to financial sustainability
- Located in 11 States: Alaska, California, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, Michigan, Maine

### American Indian and Alaska Native System of Care Communities



## National Evaluation Tribal Financing Study

- *Exploratory Description of Financing and Sustainability in American Indian and Alaska Native System of Care Communities*
- 2-year study funded by SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS)
- Conducted by the national evaluation of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program (CMHI)
- Organized approach to examining the Tribal financial sustainability experiences

## Study Questions

- What are the financing opportunities and challenges experienced by the alumni and currently funded Tribal systems of care?
- What are the economic, infrastructure, leadership, social and/or cultural issues that impact the implementation of financing strategies?

## Study Approach

- Descriptive information was collected from the 15 Tribal systems of care
- Project directors, fiscal managers, and governing board members shared their financing stories
- Site visits were held with 5 sites: Urban Indian, rural reservation (2), Alaska, Oklahoma
- Deeper discussions were held with project directors, governing board members, fiscal managers, State behavioral health and/or Medicaid reps

### Study Findings

- Tribal systems of care face serious challenges in long-term sustainability
- Financing of Tribal systems of care is complicated for many reasons, including...
  - lack of financial resources in remote communities
  - impact of Tribal–State history on the willingness and ability to pursue financial partnerships
  - lack of knowledge by potential funding sources of advantages of Tribal partnerships

### Challenges for Financial Sustainability

Tribal respondents reported that . . .

- Recognizing the impact of colonialism and historical trauma on the Tribal community's ability to plan was an essential first step in breaking non-productive planning cycles
- Tribal sustainability efforts are impacted by multiple government negotiations (Federal, State, Tribal, county levels)
  - Confusion over who is responsible for Tribal services
  - Significant investment of time is needed to educate funding sources about Tribal services
  - Tribal–State relationships varied by State, often for historical reasons

### Challenges for Financial Sustainability (cont.)

- Securing non-Federal match dollars, even if eligible Tribes and Tribal organizations are exempt from using Federal funds
- Mobilizing services to meet a community's immediate needs often takes precedence over strengthening Tribal infrastructure
- Remote locations impact everything from fund availability to Internet connectivity (which has implications for timely billing)

### Areas of Success in Achieving Financial Sustainability

- Historical mistrust of data collection was replaced by Tribal use of their data as part of Tribal nation-building
- Clinical and Traditional Practice Integration required helping funders recognize the value of culture-based practices and improved outcomes
- Medicaid access was advantageous for some Tribes (e.g., 100% FMAP rate)

### National Evaluation Sustainability Study

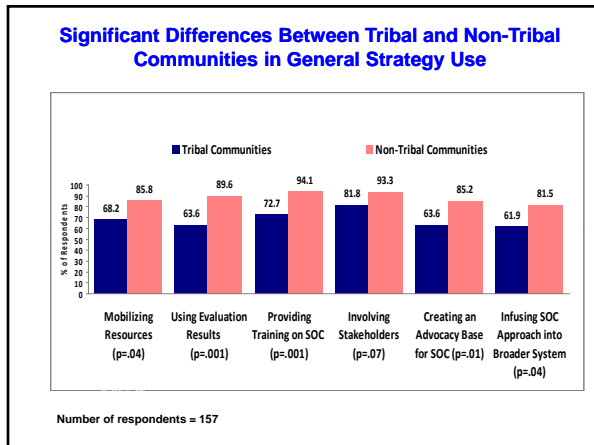
- Purpose of the study is to assess grant communities' ability to sustain key system of care components beyond the Federal grant period
- Web survey is conducted with all system of care communities at various points both during and after their grant

### Sustainability Study Analysis

- Responses from all systems of care funded in 1999–2000 and 2002–2003
- Six Tribal communities; 22 respondents
- 40 non-Tribal communities; 135 respondents
- Tribal communities' responses compared to non-Tribal communities' responses
- Outcomes included General Sustainability Strategies and Specific Financing Strategies

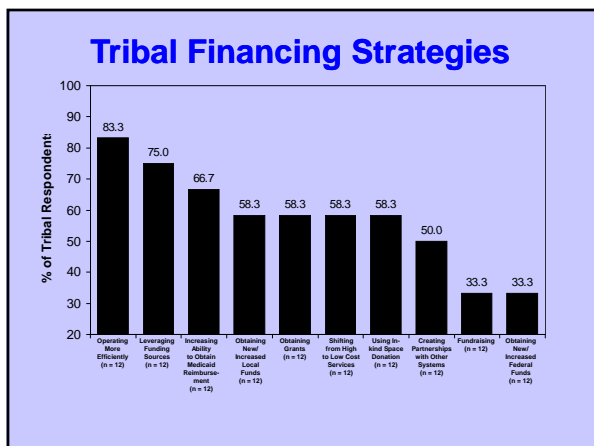
## General Strategies for Tribal Sustainability

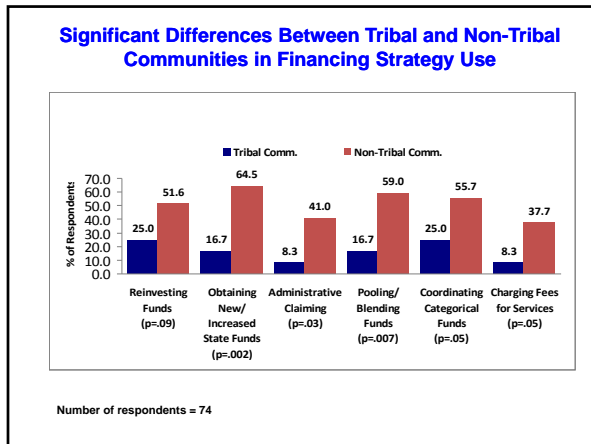
- Most commonly used strategies:
  - Cultivating strong interagency relationships
  - Involving stakeholders
  - Providing training to Tribal leaders on the system of care approach
  - Generating political and policy-level support
  - Building strong family organizations
- Least used strategy:
  - Making policy/regulatory changes



## Financing Strategies for Tribal Sustainability

- Most frequently used strategies:
  - Operating more efficiently through cutting costs
  - Leveraging funding sources
  - Increasing Medicaid charging ability
- Least used strategies:
  - Administrative claiming
  - De-categorizing funding streams
  - Charging fees for service
  - Creating new revenue





### Effectiveness of Tribal Community Strategies

- General strategies used most frequently were perceived as being at least moderately effective
- More than 80% of respondents reported using cost-cutting as a financing strategy, but 82% felt it was only somewhat or moderately effective
- 78% of those who reported using the strategy of “leveraging funding sources (including Medicaid)” thought it was no more than moderately effective

### Tribal Financing Strategies with Moderate or Less Success

- Although 67% of respondents reported attempting to obtain Medicaid reimbursement for services, 90% thought these efforts were no more than moderately effective
- Strategies used least often were also perceived as least effective by those who used them (e.g., administrative claiming, de-categorizing funding streams)

### Tribal Behavioral Health Financing Challenges

- Funding source knowledge gaps about Tribal sovereignty and Tribal political structures
- Historical trauma impacts Tribal community's ability to come together for productive sustainability planning
- Historical trauma affects interest of Tribes to develop a working relationship with the State or county

### Tribal Behavioral Health Financing Challenges

- Tribal infrastructures (e.g., computer technology, finance and billing systems, human resources) are critical to the implementation of sustainability plans but are under-developed in many communities
- Matching fund requirements (cost sharing) remain a significant challenge in communities with limited resources



### Study Findings: Future Implications

- Finance-focused training and TA
- Broader dissemination of best practices in Tribal–State partnership development
- Peer-to-peer learning opportunities on
  - Tribal accreditation
  - Tribal–State agreements
  - Tribal–Medicaid negotiations
  - third-party billing systems
  - other finance-related topics

### Summary

- Tribal communities also have a need for...
  - Broader dissemination of best practices in Tribal financing strategies
  - Models of Tribal–State partnerships that resulted in win–win financing strategies
  - Tribal accreditation
  - Tribal–State agreements
  - Tribal Medicaid negotiations

### For More Information

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