

2024 Indian Health Service Partnership Conference

Behavioral Health Financing Strategies Toolkit

**PRESENTER: LYZBETH BEST AND EVELINA
MAHO NATIONAL COUNCIL OF URBAN INDIAN HEALTH**

**TITLE: INVESTING IN WELLNESS: FINANCING STRATEGIES FOR
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN INDIAN COUNTRY**

DATE: AUGUST 14, 2024



Investing in Wellness: Financing Strategies for Behavioral Health in Indian Country

A TOOLKIT REVIEW



Speaker Introduction



Lyz Best, MPH, MA
National Council of Urban Indian Health: Manager of Technical Assistance



Evelina Maho, MAdm
National Council of Urban Indian Health: Director of Technical Assistance



Disclaimer

This project is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Pew Charitable Trusts.



About the National Council of Urban Indian Health



NCUIH is a national representative advocating for the 41 Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) contracting with the Indian Health Service (IHS) under the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA). NCUIH strives to improve the health of the over 70% of the AI/AN population that lives in urban areas, supported by quality health care centers.



Session Overview

1. Polling Activity
2. Overview of the Behavioral Health Financing Toolkit
3. Key Strategies
4. Collaborative Discussion



Polling Activity

- What is your primary source of funding for behavioral health services?
- How challenging is it for your organization to secure sustainable funding for behavioral health programs?
- What types of funding would most benefit your behavioral health programs (e.g., grants, Medicaid reimbursement, private donations)?



slido

Please download and install the Slido app on all computers you use



What is your primary source of funding for behavioral health services?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido

Please download and install the Slido app on all computers you use



How challenging is it for your organization to secure sustainable funding for behavioral health programs?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido

Please download and install the Slido app on all computers you use



What types of funding would most benefit your behavioral health programs (e.g., grants, Medicaid reimbursement, private donations)?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Identifying the Need

- **Disproportionate Burden of Mental Health Conditions**

- In the past year, 19% of AI/AN people (or an estimated 1.4 million) reported mental illness and 26% of those individuals were under 18 (Mental Health America, 2023)

- **Mental Health Funding is a Top Tribal Priority:**

- FY 25 Tribal request for mental health funding was >3000% over current levels (Honor Trust and Treaty Obligations, 2023)

- **Need for Sustainable, Flexible Mental Health Solutions:** "Tribes and nonprofits may get two-or three-year grants to address an issue that cannot possibly be resolved in that amount of time."

- **Limited Access to Services:** Barriers Include Economic barriers (cost, lack of insurance) • Lack of awareness about mental health and available services • Stigma associated with mental illness • Lack of culturally sensitive mental health services • Mistrust of health care providers • Lack of appropriate intervention strategies (including integration of mental health and primary health care services)



Importance of Sustainable Funding



Enhanced Access to Care

Resources on funding can help communities access essential behavioral health services that may otherwise be out of reach



Funding for Traditional Healing

Understanding funding options for traditional healing can lead to improved quality of care and improved patient outcomes



Financial Sustainability

Access to funding opportunities can help sustain behavioral health programs over time

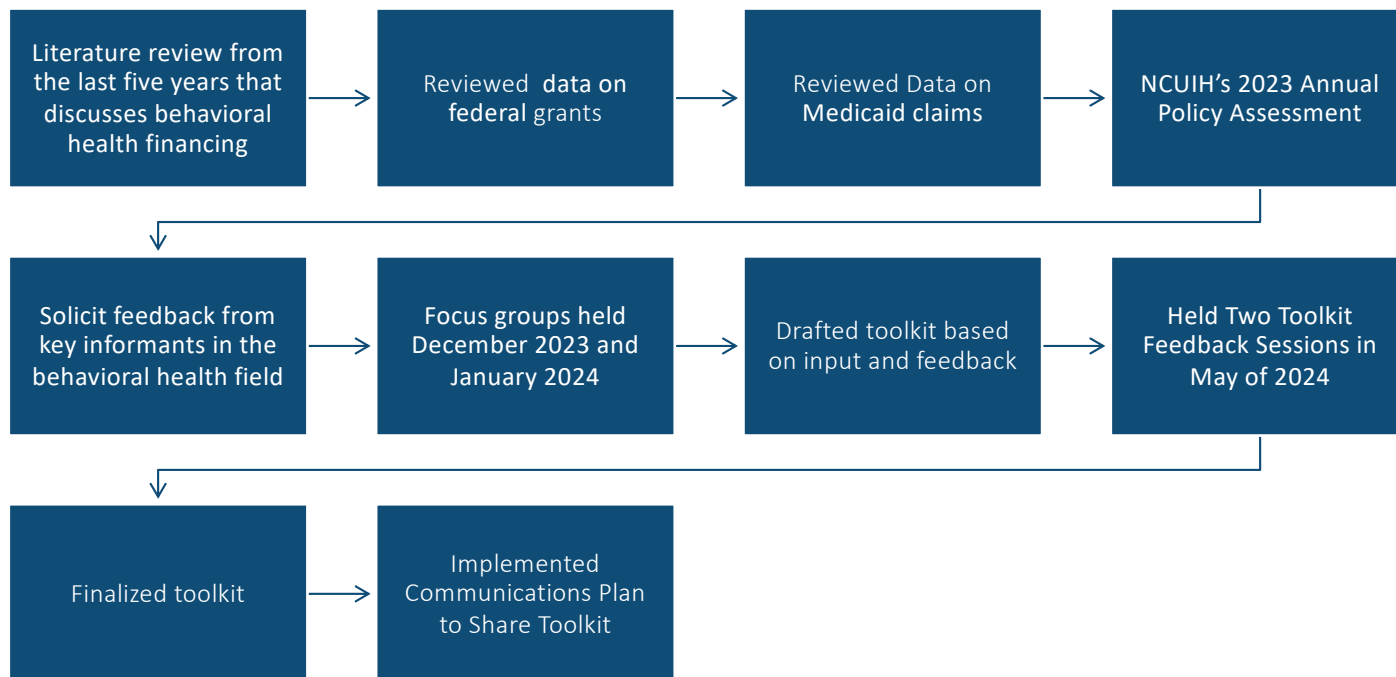


Culturally Competent Workforce Development

Understanding funding resources and accreditation can support the development of a culturally competent behavioral health workforce

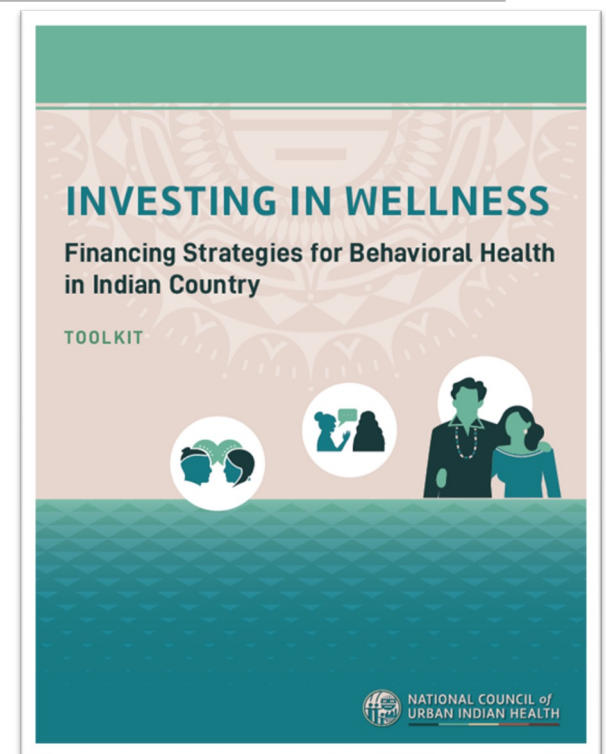


Toolkit Methodology



Toolkit Overview

Goal: This toolkit will provide key information and resources necessary to develop American Indian health care systems applicable and practical financing strategies to implement and strengthen access to prevention, treatment, and recovery services for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) beneficiaries including Tribal Nations, Tribal Health Organizations And Urban Indian Organizations.



Key Questions Answered

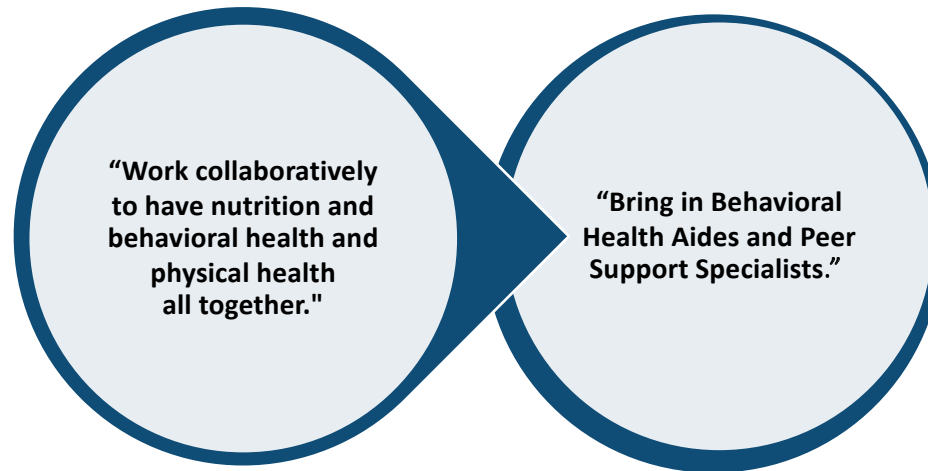
1. What are strategies to finance behavioral health services (e.g., mental health services; substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery services; and harm reduction services) for Indigenous Peoples?
2. How do these strategies strengthen the financing of behavioral health services?
3. What kind of staffing model is needed to support the implementation of each behavioral health financing strategy?
4. What are potential limitations or barriers to implementing each behavioral health financing strategy?



Behavioral Health Financing Strategies: What We Heard...



Behavioral Health Financing Strategies: What We Heard...



Toolkit Contents



Section 1: Introduction



Section 2: Behavioral Health Landscape



Section 3: Understanding the Patient Journey



Section 4: Behavioral Health Financing Strategies



Section 5: Tying it All Together



Section 6: Appendix/Resources



Strategy 1: Enhancing Behavioral Health Care Access Through Optimizing Medicaid Reimbursement

14% of patients at UIOs receive Mental Health Services. Mental Health Services are 1.6% of Medicaid reimbursements. (TAF, 2021)

5% of patients receiving Substance Abuse Services at UIOs comprise only 0.4% of Medicaid reimbursements. (TAF, 2021)

UIOs with FQHC designation received an average reimbursement of \$72.10 for each outpatient mental health claim. UIOs without FQHC designation received an avg. of \$18.40 for each outpatient mental health claim. (TAF, 2021)



Strategy 1: Enhancing Behavioral Health Care Access Through Optimizing Medicaid Reimbursement

1. Integrating behavioral health into primary care to streamline reimbursement.
2. Becoming a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) to benefit from more generous behavioral health reimbursement structures.



Strategy 1: Enhancing Behavioral Health Care Access Through Optimizing Medicaid Reimbursement

Provide Comprehensive Services

Have an ongoing quality assurance program including an annual review

Serve a designated Medically Underserved Area (MUA) or Medically Underserved Population (MUP)

Offer a sliding fee scale to persons with incomes below 200 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines

Be part of an organization governed by a board of directors, with at least 51% of the health centerboard members being patients of the health center and demographically representative of the populations served



Strategy 2: Traditional Healing as a Financially Sustainable Strategy for Improving Behavioral Health



Cultural Relevance: Traditional healing can lead to increased engagement and participation in behavioral health services.



Cost Effectiveness: Requires fewer financing resources compared to Western medical interventions.



Holistic approach: Addresses physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of health. A comprehensive approach can lead to better health outcomes and reduced long-term health costs.



Strategy 2: Traditional Healing as a Financially Sustainable Strategy for Improving Behavioral Health

- ❖ Many focus group respondents reported using Traditional Healing practices as part of their behavioral health services.
- ❖ Financing Traditional Healing practices was a high priority for these respondents.
- ❖ One respondent optimized Medicaid reimbursements by registering their Traditional Healers with a National Provider Identifier (NPI) record to make them eligible for Medicaid reimbursement.
- ❖ Previous NCUIH research found aligning Traditional Healing services with existing behavioral health coding systems to make those services eligible for reimbursement.
- ❖ For example, the Traditional Healing practice of “Talking Circles” can be billed as “Group Therapy,” aligning Western therapy with traditional practices.



Strategy 3: Cultivating Funding Opportunities for Behavioral Health Programming- Enhancing Access to Federal, State, Local and Private Grants



Diversify Revenue Streams: Cultivating funding opportunities helps to diversify revenue streams for behavioral health programs.



Expands Program Reach: By accessing federal, state, local, and private grants behavioral health programs can expand reach.



Enhances Sustainability: Funding opportunities are essential to long-term sustainability.



Strategy 4: Investing in Prevention for Behavioral Health Financing in Indian Country

Implement effective cost reduction and resource management strategies, including:

- Prevention;
- Behavioral Health Integration; and
- Crisis Care.

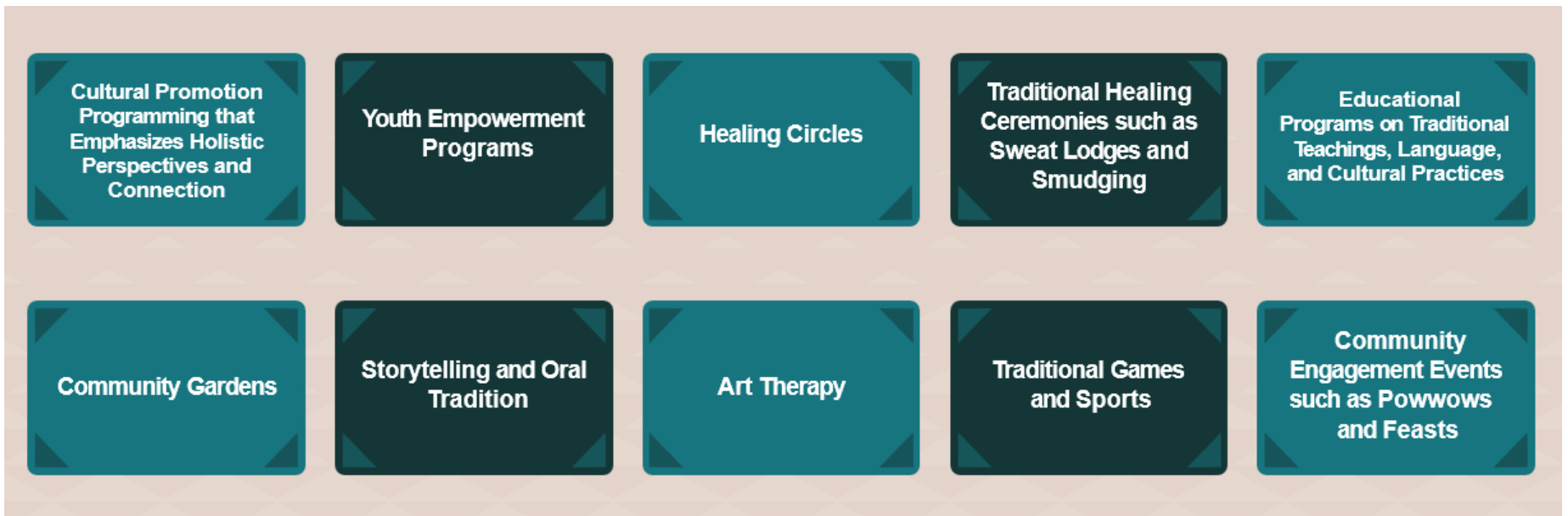




Strategy 4: Maximizing Impact: Cost Savings in Primary Prevention

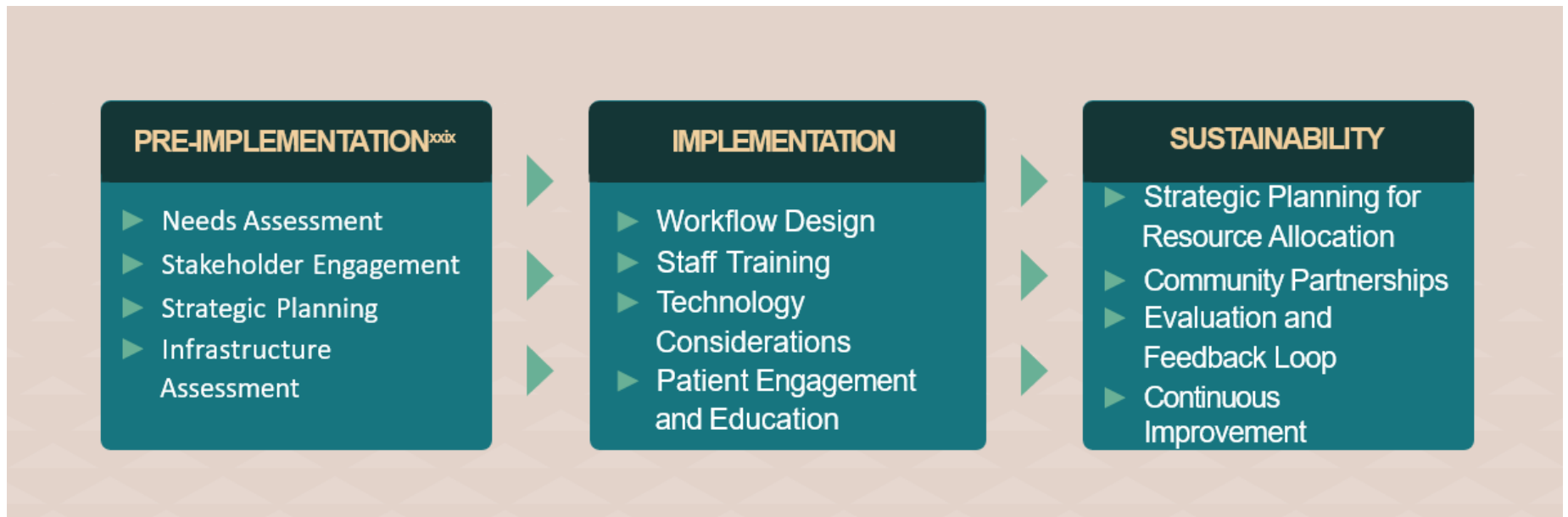
- Cost Savings
- Increased Productivity and Workforce Participation
- Reduced Incidence and Severity of Mental and Physical Disease
- Lower Rates of Mental Health Disorders and Substance Use
- Prioritizing Native Youth
- Addresses Root Causes

Strategy 4: Investing in Prevention, Crisis Care, and Integrated Services



2024 IHS PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE





Strategy 4: Behavioral Health Integration

2024 IHS PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE

Strategy 5: Building a Sustainable Workforce with Telehealth Services and Workforce Expansion Strategies

- Innovative Approaches to Workforce Capacity Building
- Cultural Competence Training for Behavioral Health Staff
- Telehealth Expansion and Support



Strategy 5: Building a Sustainable Workforce with Telehealth Services and Workforce Expansion Strategies

Address Workforce Shortages:

- Utilize Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (PMHNPs)
- Implement Peer Support Models
- Adopt Open-Access Models
- Utilize Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Community Health Representatives (CHR)



Strategy 5: Building a Sustainable Workforce with Telehealth Services and Workforce Expansion Strategies

Cost Effectiveness/Culturally Competent Workforce

- Emphasize cultural competency training for all behavioral health professions in AI/AN communities
- Culturally informed care enhances trust and effectiveness improving health outcomes



Strategy 5: Building a Sustainable Workforce with Telehealth Services and Workforce Expansion Strategies

Telehealth Expansion and Support

- Expand telehealth infrastructure and support in remote areas and areas where there are limited behavioral health resources
- Telehealth reduces geographic barriers, allowing continuous care and immediate access to behavioral health services.



Tying it All Together: A Roadmap for Sustainability

- A comprehensive funding strategy involves understanding community options and needs.
- No single funding source will suffice for all your community's behavioral health needs, consider diversifying funding streams.
- A well-thought-out strategy can help ensure the long-term viability and effectiveness of behavioral health programs.

Assessment
of Needs and
Resources

Diversification
of Funding
Sources

Strategic
Planning

Sustainability
Planning



Accessing the Toolkit

- Toolkit Launch Webinar, August 22, 2024 @ 2:00 pm EDT
- For toolkit copies reach out to lbst@ncuih.org



Discussion



Contact Information

Name: Lyzbeth Best

Title: Manager of Technical Assistance

Email: lbest@ncuih.org

Name: Evelina Maho

Title: Director of Technical Assistance

Email: emaho@ncuih.org



References

1. American Psychiatric Association. (n.d.). Mental health disparities: Mental health facts for American Indian/Alaska Natives. Retrieved from <https://www.psychiatry.org/File%20Library/Psychiatrists/Cultural-Competency/Mental-Health-Disparities/Mental-Health-Facts-for-American-Indian-Alaska-Natives.pdf>
2. Honor Trust and Treaty Obligations: A Tribal Budget Request to Address the Tribal Health Inequity Crisis. (2023, April). The National Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup's Request for the Indian Health Service Fiscal Year 2025 Budget. Retrieved from <https://www.nihb.org/resources/FY2025%20IHS%20National%20Tribal%20Budget%20Formulation%20Workgroup%20Requests.pdf>
3. IHS Office of Urban Indian Health Programs. (2020). UDS Summary Report - 2018. Retrieved from https://www.ihs.gov/sites/urban/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/2018_UIHP_UDS_Summary_Report_Final.pdf
4. Mental Health America. (2023). Native and Indigenous communities and mental health. Retrieved from <https://www.nihb.org/resources/FY2025%20IHS%20National%20Tribal%20Budget%20Formulation%20Workgroup%20Requests.pdf>
5. TAF Other Services File | ResDAC Data Dictionary. (n.d.). Retrieved April 8, 2021, from <https://resdac.org/cms-data/files/taf-ot>
6. Woodard, S. (2012). Suicide is epidemic for American Indian youth: What more can be done? NBC News. Retrieved from https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA_Digital_Download/pep16-ntbh-agenda.pdf



