

Updates: tribal action plan, health services



LANA CAUSLEY, DIRECTOR, UNIT II

We are moving forward on our tribe’s Tribal Action Plan for drug assessment and a tribal-wide plan to combat the problem. I’ve written about this many times in past reports and many families suffered and remain suffering. I’m very happy to post the below resolution that the board of directors recently passed to officially organize, hold attendees responsible to attend and complete objectives.

In the text, you’ll see that a representative from each of our tribe’s departments SHALL attend as well as a member of the board from each unit (if a member cannot make it, they MUST send a delegate). As stated in the past, we must have all decision makers and muscle at the table to be serious and consistent on this project.

I’m so grateful to the staff, community members and board members who have taken this to a level of law per a resolution. We now can schedule and attend community meetings in all areas to have your input and involvement with the task, the group has scheduled a plan to hold the community forums February through April, with focus groups for our service providers and team members in December. I have received emails and calls about this and please keep them coming. We will be placing all public meetings on our Sault Tribe website (saulttribe.com) as well as posting in tribal centers. Once again, we have great professionals from Fox Valley assisting. I would like to recognize our tribal court staff on securing that funding. It’s a solid start and I’m grateful its law to recognize and implement real plans and goals to accomplish.

Here is the full text of the resolution:

To Develop and Implement a Tribal Action Plan for a Comprehensive Prevention and Treatment Program for Alcoholism and other Substance Abuse

“WHEREAS, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians is a federally recognized Indian Tribe organized under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, 25 U.S.C. 467 et seq; and

“WHEREAS, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians is a federally recognized Indian Tribe exercising full powers of self government, including comprehensive law enforcement and judicial services program; and

“WHEREAS, the Indian

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment Act of 1986, as amended by the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010, proclaims alcoholism, addiction, and alcohol and substance abuse are among the most severe public health and safety problems facing American Indian and Alaska Native individuals, families, and communities, resulting in devastating social, economic, physical, mental and spiritual consequences, and

“WHEREAS, the Indian Health Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs officials publicly acknowledge that alcohol and substance abuse among Indians is the most serious health and social problem facing Indian people, and

“WHEREAS, Congress declared that the Federal government has a historical relationship and unique legal and moral responsibilities which include the treaty, statutory, and historical obligation to assist Indian Tribes to meet the health and social needs of their members, and

“WHEREAS, Congress declared that Indian Tribes have the primary responsibility for protecting and ensuring the well-being of their members and are providing resources to assist Indian Tribes in meeting that responsibility, and

“WHEREAS, the Tribe finds that alcoholism and other substance abuse is a threat to our Tribe, affecting the physical, mental, social spiritual, and economic wellbeing of Tribal members and other Indians living within the Tribal jurisdiction, and

WHEREAS, the Tribe elects to join the Federal government to combat the damaging effects of alcoholism and other substance abuse, and to recognize the intent of the Memorandum of Agreement, and

“WHEREAS, the purpose of the Tribal Action Plan shall be to coordinate a comprehensive prevention and treatment program for alcoholism and other substance abuse and will include not only existing resources, but will identify the additional resources necessary to combat these problems, and

“WHEREAS, the Indian Health Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs have identified major areas of common interest in health promotion and disease prevention as youth alcohol and drug abuse, nutrition, curricula development for health promotion and disease prevention, training for community health representatives, health aides, Tribal judges, law enforcement personnel, education and social service personnel, youth suicide, child abuse and neglect, teen pregnancy, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

“NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Tribe endorses the establishment of a Tribal Action Plan Advisory Board and designates the following positions on the Advisory Board: the Tribal Chairperson, three (3) members of the Board of Directors, the Chief Judge, the Chief of Police, the Director of

Sault Tribe Behavioral Health, the ACFS Division Director, the Housing Director, the Tribal Prosecutor, the Court Administrator/Magistrate, the Specialty Court Coordinator, the Health Division Director, a community representative, a representative from the Cultural Department, the Assistant Membership/Internal Services Executive Director, a Human Resources Manager, the Elder Services Division Director, a representative from Youth Education and Activities; and a representative from Planning and Development.

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Tribal Action Plan Advisory Board is provided full Board of Directors’ support to work with the assistance of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Agency and Bureau of Indian Education where appropriate, and the Indian Health Service, the Office of Justice Programs, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, as those agencies are mandated by the Tribal Law and Order Act in fulfilling the Advisory Board’s mission; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Tribe recognizes the importance of an active Board in developing and implementing the Tribal Action Plan and requires that all members of the Board prioritize their role on the Advisory Board and make every effort to attend all scheduled meetings and trainings, and only in the event that they cannot attend, send a designee on behalf of their department/agency; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Tribal Action Plan Advisory Board is provided full Board of Directors support with the authority to develop and implement a Tribal Action Plan; have the responsibility for on-going review and evaluation of, and making recommendations to the Tribe relating to the Tribal Action Plan; have the responsibility for scheduling Federal, Tribal, or other personnel for training in the prevention and treatment of alcohol and substance abuse among Indians; to identify and address problems that arise concerning service coordination; and incorporate minimum standards for this program and services which it encompasses, and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Tribe charges the Tribal Action Plan Advisory Board to prioritize services to Indian youth in the development of the Tribal Action Plan; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Tribe has prioritized alcoholism and substance abuse prevention and treatment as a primary issue to deal with, and has directed that a comprehensive program in compliance with the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, P.L. 99-570, be developed to address the needs of Tribal members and other Indians living within the Tribal jurisdiction.”

At the November board meeting we also hired an executive director for our tribe, Christine

McPherson. Christine is a tribal member who has worked for our tribe many years. As the past ACFS director, she was instrumental in the creation of our Binogii Placement Agency and helped establish many of the programs we have in place now. She’s fair, understanding and approachable for our members but she is also tough so the funding sources can’t bully her and neither can the board of directors. I’m happy she was selected and look forward to her continued work for our members.

We held two three-day work sessions on the constitution. It seems the process is to go over the complete document again and those attending are making changes as discussed by the attendees. I have not made all the sessions but plan to attend as much as possible. Unit II has two dedicated elders from our sub-committee groups attending, “thank you” to them. They have an opportunity to see and explain their position on it. Last time the board was not to get involved whatsoever, this time, board members are changing items completely.

As always, I’m supportive of making amendments to our constitution, that way we all understand the specific change and we vote as a tribe on each one. I’m not clear as to where this process will take us and if it’s a completely new document again, please read carefully once it’s complete. Keep calling me on your thoughts about this; it’s a crucial item for our tribe as a whole and I’m treading lightly to represent our members and concerns on both paths for the project. We need changes but not all members want a completely different document, but changes are needed and I support making those. I have been discussing the separation of powers with an attorney who is a member of our tribe but is not employed by the tribe. Together, we are discussing the creation of legislation that would separate the board

of directors from the court; this would be a start and one of the priority changes needed and that I hear about the most from members. A good solid plan will be forthcoming and on the table for the board’s discussion, review and input.

We have discussed, and I’m happy to report, we are truly seeking and coming up with a plan to reinstate health services to those who live in the outlying areas. We passed a law that puts a deadline on bringing back information and stats on the plan to have those services again. Both Director Hollowell and I will be at the table to be part of this and the deadline for a full board detailed presentation is scheduled for April 2013 — this gives the department plenty of time to secure existing funds and make the arguments that those living in the out lying units NEED services in those areas. This will be a priority on my agenda until we see the services back in our Units II, IV and V.

Well, Christmas time is here. Our children’s Christmas parties were scheduled for Dec. 8 (Hessel, DeTour), Dec. 11 (Newberry) and Dec.15 (Engadine). The ladies and families who organize these put their hearts into making them special for our youth, so please thank them in your communities. The chairs for the community parties are Lisa Burnside, Marylynn McCarthy, Michelle Derusha, Lois Bryant and Shirley Kowalke. Miigwech!

In closing I would like to wish everyone a blessed Christmas time with your families; I’m so grateful for mine. My girls are healthy, happy and full of spirit. I can’t ask for anything else! Remember and pray for our active and retired veterans and pay close attention to all those ’lil Christmas miracles because they happen every day. Merry Christmas!

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