

## **Southern Plains Tribal Health Board and Community Health Charities launch new American Indian Health Fund**

*Organizations aim to raise \$3 million to cover gaps left by government shortfalls  
and help make a healthier life possible for American Indians*

**Washington, DC (April 13, 2017)** – Yesterday, the Southern Plains Tribal Health Board and Community Health Charities announced a new partnership and unveiled the American Indian Health Fund at the Southern Plains Tribal Health Board’s 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Tribal Public Health Conference in Tulsa at the Riverspirit Casino and Resort (Muscogee Creek Nation). The goal is to raise \$3 million dollars over the next three years to create new programs targeting deficits in tribal public health outcomes for American Indians.

It’s the first time the Southern Plains Tribal Health Board is fundraising in 45 years. Although Community Health Charities has been in Oklahoma raising money since the 1960s, this is the organization’s first partnership with the Tribal nations.

*“We all have to get to work and roll up our sleeves,” said Cynthia Rolfe, retired VP, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Community Health Charities’ board vice chair, who spoke at the fund launch. “American Indians are disproportionately affected by long-term health challenges that in many cases can be prevented. Data shows we can improve the health of American Indians, but more resources are critically needed.”*

Under the new administration, current prevention grant funding has been frozen, and future prevention grants like CDC and SAMHSA are in danger of being unfunded, which would be catastrophic to tribal nations and tribal organizations. The American Indian Health Fund will support healthy lifestyle options, disease management programs, education and prevention resources, availability to health services, and research to improve care and treatment.

*“Not only is suicide a serious issue, but diabetes, and many other health issues. My daughter is a suicide survivor as a lot of our families are in Indian Country, so this is a very personal issue for us,” said Jenifer LittleSun, Pawnee Nation, and executive director of the Southern Plains Tribal Health Board. “However we can help people, that’s what we’re going to do. It’s not only about raising money, it’s about all of us working together. This is really important. We all help the greater good.”*

Global Health, Inc. was the first to step up with a pledge for the new fund, and they will be running a workplace giving campaign. The Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations are exploring ways to support the cause, plus the fund is being placed in Oklahoma workplace giving campaigns, as well as campaigns in 36 other states.

The fund is powered by Community Health Charities to support Southern Plains Tribal Health Board, American Diabetes Association, Limbs for Life, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and Camp Blue Hawk.

For more information on this effort, visit: <http://www.spthb.org/> and [healthcharities.org/aih](http://healthcharities.org/aih)

## NEWS RELEASE



Or, watch the event on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/spthb/videos/1168856659889305/>

Photos available.

**The Southern Plains Tribal Health Board**, a nonprofit based in Oklahoma City, provides a unified voice for the 43 federally recognized tribes located in the states of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas.

**Community Health Charities** is a national nonprofit with an Oklahoma presence, raising awareness and resources for health by connecting the top health nonprofits with caring supporters and businesses through health and wellness programs, employee engagement, workplace campaigns and strategic partnerships. Over the past five years, Community Health Charities has raised more than \$400 million to support the nearly 2,000 health charities in our network. For more information about Community Health Charities, visit [healthcharities.org](http://healthcharities.org), follow @HealthCharities on Twitter, or call 1-800-654-0845.

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