

# California Tribal MAT Project

January 2020

## A unified response to the opioid crisis in California Indian country

### THE NEED

Reflecting national trends, American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations in California have the highest rates of opioid-related overdose deaths among any racial or ethnic group. The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) developed the California Tribal Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Project to address this urgent need. A unified response to the opioid crisis in California Indian Country, the Tribal MAT Project is designed to meet the specific opioid use disorder (OUD) prevention, treatment, and recovery needs of California's Tribal and Urban Indian communities. The approach to addressing OUD must respect tribes' traditional approaches to wellness and contain components to address mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness in addition to physical wellness – and include cultural connection.



### ABOUT THE TRIBAL MAT PROJECT

In close partnership with representatives of the communities being served, DHCS launched the Tribal MAT Project to promote opioid safety, improve the availability and provision of MAT, and facilitate wider access to naloxone with special consideration for Tribal and Urban Indian values, culture, and treatments.

The Tribal MAT Project provides culturally based education to Tribal and Urban Indian patients, providers, and communities on topics such as

prescription opioids, stigma, non-opioid pain management, overdose reversal, and MAT effectiveness. Tribal MAT supports community and cultural support systems to address whole-person wellness as critical to ending the epidemic. Tribal MAT seeks to make evidence-based treatment, including FDA-approved medications such as buprenorphine, readily available in Tribal and Urban Indian health programs.

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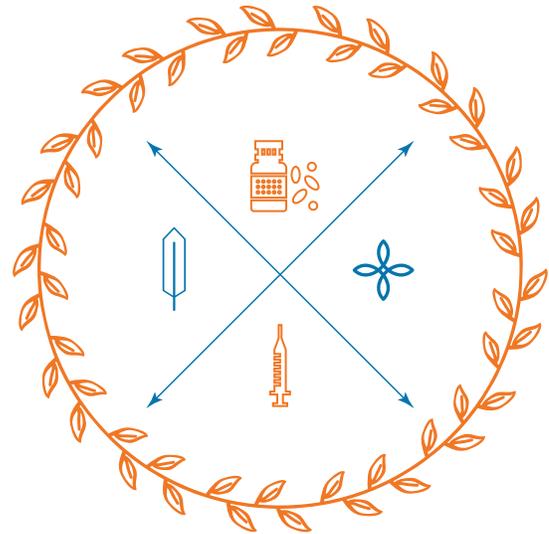
## TRIBAL MAT PARTNERSHIPS

DHCS engaged key stakeholders with extensive experience working with Tribal and Urban Indian health programs, Tribal governments, and AI/AN communities in California.

DHCS and its partners understand the magnitude and importance of the task ahead of them. Armed with the first-hand knowledge of the needs of California's Tribal and Urban Indian communities, the Tribal MAT Project is addressing gaps in service, while the partners share the messages through effective mediums for AI/AN audiences. Together, their experience, skills, and expertise allow for a comprehensive, cultural treatment and prevention approach in support of tribal health in California.

The California Consortium for Urban Indian Health and the California Rural Indian Health Board serve American Indians living in California cities and Tribal communities, respectively, and are launching community opioid campaigns, distributing and training on naloxone, supporting opioid safety coalition participation, and serving as MAT champions.

To reduce barriers to access such as a lack of transportation or providers, TeleWell Behavioral



Medicine provides tele-MAT services to AI/AN patients and offers technical assistance to Tribal and Urban Indian health programs interested in providing MAT.

Two Feathers Native American Family Services; the University of California, Los Angeles; and the University of Southern California are also important partners. Two Feathers supports family and youth in the high-needs area of Humboldt County; UCLA leads the Tribal MAT ECHO Project, which supports providers in Indian Country to deliver MAT; and USC conducted a statewide needs assessment to better understand the impact of OUD in rural and urban AI/AN communities.

### **CALIFORNIA CONSORTIUM FOR URBAN INDIAN HEALTH (CCUIH) AND CALIFORNIA RURAL INDIAN HEALTH BOARD (CRIHB)**

Launching community opioid campaigns, distributing and training on naloxone, supporting opioid safety coalition participation, and serving as MAT champions.

### **TELEWELL BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE AND UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES**

Reducing barriers to access such as a lack of transportation or providers by providing telehealth services to AI/AN patients and training providers.

### **TWO FEATHERS**

Supporting treatment and recovery through the Tribal Youth & Family Services Consortium, using Native American Mental Health Theory of Change.

### **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

Conducted a statewide needs assessment of 10 counties to better understand the impact of OUD in rural and urban AI/AN communities.