



Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians

Executive Branch of Tribal Government

Office of the Chief Executive

Via E-mail

Virgil Wind
Chief Executive
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
43408 Oodena Drive
Onamia, MN 56359

October 15, 2024

Alexa Romberg, Ph.D., Research Contact
Deputy Branch Chief
Prevention Research Branch
National Institute of Drug Abuse/NIH
alex.romberg@nih.gov

Re: Letter of Support with Intent to Seek Tribal Resolution: NNCOE Project: Grandmothers' Arms Project NIDA PAR-23-285, R34-Intervention Research to Improve Native American Health (IRINAH) Program

Dear Dr. Romberg:

This letter of support is for the National Native Center of Excellence ("NNCOE"), which is a new research, training, and technical assistance center in service to Tribal Nations and Native communities across Indian Country and Alaska. NNCOE's National Native Advisory Council ("NNAC") helps guide the operation and expansion of the Center in collaboration with community members, Elders, culture bearers, and other leaders.

The occurrence of opioid misuse and overdose deaths in Native Communities has reached crisis levels. Tragically, Native children and youth have the highest rate of experiencing the loss of a parent/caregiver due to overdose death of any population in the United States. The NNCOE proposes a tribe-specific, culturally led, and community-driven developmental research project called *Grandmothers' Arms*.

This project's approach utilizes evidence-based models and research methods from Native science, prioritizing tribe- and community-specific Indigenous knowledge, worldviews, and value systems. The project will articulate the development and piloting of an intervention through the Kinship System Circles Model to identify tribally and community-determined healing approaches, methods, and practices that support sustained healing and increased quality of life for children, youth, and their families which have lost those in caregiver roles due to overdose death. The Grandmothers' Arms project will be instrumental in helping our children and youth thrive. They are the future of our Nation.

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Health & Human Services' Cultural Program is interested in partnering with the National Native Center of Excellence to develop a model that contributes to

Letter from Chief Executive Virgil Wind to Alexa Romberg, Ph.D.
Re: Letter of Support with Intent to Seek Tribal Resolution: NNCOE Project
October 15, 2024
Page 2 of 2

positive outcomes that are centered around our culture and community strengths for our youth struggling with grief and loss.

Should you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact me at (320) 630-1428. You may also contact me by e-mail at virgil.wind@millelacsband.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Virgil Wind
Chief Executive
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

CC:

Dr. Rosemary White Shield, Principal Investigator
Dr. Pamela Jumper-Thurman, Co-Principal Investigator