

Developing Dissemination Materials for American Indian/Alaska Native Pregnant/Postpartum Individuals with Opioid Use Disorder

Background and Rationale

The number of pregnant persons with opioid use disorder (OUD) has grown significantly with the current opioid epidemic. Opioid-related overdose is now a leading cause of death in pregnant and postpartum individuals overall. Opioid-related deaths in pregnant American Indian/Alaska Natives (AIAN) are higher per capita than other racial/ethnic groups. Medications for OUD (MOUD) are effective in preventing opioid-related overdoses in pregnant and postpartum individuals (PP), as well as improving pregnancy outcomes, but are underutilized in part due to inaccurate perceptions. Further, AIANs have more difficulties obtaining MOUD compared with White, non-Hispanic individuals, especially in rural areas.

Funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) was provided to develop these dissemination materials to help address the high rates of pregnancy-related complications and deaths due to OUD in AIAN communities.

Creation of the Dissemination Package

Identification of Messaging Targets

Experts in the treatment of pregnant and postpartum individuals with opioid use disorder formed a panel to develop the materials. Several members of the panel had specific expertise in treating AIAN populations. Some other collaborators who identify as AIAN were invited to join the panel. This expert panel began by reviewing published guidelines on treating pregnant individuals with OUD, and by discussing their own experiences. Next, the panel compiled a list of potential messages and potential formats for the materials. This list was then shared with a group of researchers and collaborators who identified as AIAN or their allies. This group provided feedback to the expert panel on messaging, specific formatting, language, and cultural considerations.

Development of Materials

Using that feedback, the expert panel drafted a number of potential dissemination tools and provided them to contractors at NIDA for development of the actual dissemination package. This required several rounds of drafts and revisions. Each time, the expert panel, AIAN researchers and allies, and other AIAN collaborators would review and send feedback for revising the materials. Prior to the final draft, a group of providers who treat AIANs with MOUD also reviewed the materials and gave feedback.

Finalization of Materials

After creating the final drafts, the Dissemination Package was sent to the officials at NIDA, who approved the materials for public distribution.