

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

The threat of substance abuse has been historically prevalent within Indian Country. As a Tribe we need to do more and focus more upon prevention and treatment of this affliction. Often substance abuse issues result in criminal prosecution and incarceration. While this is one option, it does not provide treatment or prevention from this affliction.

When the Tribe sends an individual to jail there are court costs, as well as the Tribal financial obligation to hold these individuals within local jails (we do not have our own). We should be looking at developing our own in-patient treatment center to tackle this issue head on. The funds earmarked for incarceration could just as easily be utilized for treatment. Our former medical center in Wetmore sits vacant and unused and could provide an excellent possibility in the development of such facility.

In addition to treatment, we need to do more to prevent this threat to our communities. We need to provide more opportunities for our children, more focused learning, cultural programming, fitness, and more. These things can be accomplished with our current funding by collaboration and proper planning. We have the tools to make a difference; it is time that we started using them.