

September 19-21, 2007

ITEM 136-2005-R0907

**Approval to Establish Center for Native Health Partnerships;
Montana State University-Bozeman**

THAT:

The Board of Regents of Higher Education Authorizes Montana State University-Bozeman to Establish a Center for Native Health Partnerships.

EXPLANATION:

Montana State University-Bozeman seeks authorization to create the Center for Native Health Partnerships. This Center aims to redress the health concerns and reverse the health disparities experienced by Native Americans living in Montana. It is generally agreed that research is an essential component in eliminating health disparities, however many groups who experience health disparities have had negative experiences with researchers and with research processes. Understandably, these experiences have led many communities and community members to distrust both the process of research and the people involved in research. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a research process that seeks to build trust, relationships, and partnerships between community members and researchers. CBPR has a well established track record of engaging underserved populations and advancing the personal, social and institutional change needed for achieving improved health and quality of life.

The central practical purpose of the Center is to facilitate change in the way that research has historically been conducted with tribal nations by bringing together researchers and communities to establish trust, share power, foster co-learning, enhance strengths and resources, build capacity, and examine and address community-identified needs and health problems. These institutional and behavioral changes are critical to achieving the ultimate outcomes sought through this project: improvements in Native Americans' health and reduction of health disparities.

The MSU Center will be supported by an NIH grant, under the P20 funding mechanism. This program is to "*Establish An Exploratory National Center in Minority Health and Health Disparities*" and the MSU center is organized under the auspices of the grant guidance. There are four cores programs that constitute the center: the administrative core; the research core; the research training core and the community engagement core. Linda Hyman, Vice Provost for Health Sciences at MSU is the Principle Investigator of the grant and the Center will be housed within the Division of Health Sciences. Dr. Hyman will also lead the Administrative Core. There are three co-Principle Investigators of the project. Dr. Suzanne Christopher, Professor in the Department of Health and Human Development will lead the research core; Dr. Mike Babcock, Professor, Department of Psychology will lead the research training core and Sara Young will lead the community engagement core.