

White House Conference on Aging – Gray Testimony

Norman, OK
May 6, 2015

NIEEL, Jacque Gray

Issue: There is a need to increase the number of tribes who have enacted an elder abuse code in their tribal law.

Recommendation from Jacque Gray: Encourage tribes to enact coese that will protect their elders for abuse and neglect

Issue: Few tribes have the services to report, investigate and intervene in elder abuse situations

Recommendation from Jacque Gray: Increase funding and staff to the tribes to enforce elder abuse codes and better aid in the reporting, investigation and intervention of elder abuse cases in Indian Country.

Issue: An elder abuse policy is needed for Indian Country.

Recommendation from Jacque Gray: Require mandatory reporting of elder abuse to tribal authorities by health care, social services, elder services, and law enforcement.

Issue: Need for an elder abuse needs assessment of our elders to understand the scope of the problem, the type of services that are needed and where they are needed.

Recommendation from Jacque Gray: Implement a culturally appropriate survey on elder abuse behaviors that could be compared to national data would help tribes understand their problems around elder abuse and determine what laws, policies, services and resources they need to protect their elders. It would also demonstrate to federal policy makers the extent of the need in Indian Country

Issue: Need for training on recognizing and intervening in elder abuse problems.

Recommendation from Jacque Gray: Standardized, culturally relevant surveys of Native American elders to determine what is happening, how it is happening, and what services and resources are available. Tribal legal services, health care providers, elder works, and social services need to participate in culturally relevant training in recognition and intervention in elder abuse in Indian Country.

Issue: Some tribes have implemented culturally relevant programs to address these issues including multi-disciplinary elder protection teams, elder councils, law enforcement visitation programs and family restoration programs. These programs are working in their communities and we know from the practice based evidence they work

Recommendation from Jacque Gray: These tribally developed programs need to be evaluated for their effectiveness so that they may be listed as evidence-based interventions that would qualify for funding. Research to address these model program needs to be funded. Examination of practice-based evidence, in addition to evidence-based practices to be acceptable for funding of tribal programs.

Issue: Many tribes cannot afford to implement the changes necessary to implement the tribal law and order act (TLOA), they still do not have the protections when issues cross jurisdictional lines.

Recommendation from Jacque Gray: Financial institutions should be conducting training for their staff to recognize unusual withdrawals and payments by elders to help identify and stop elder exploitation. They call about unusually charges on credit and debit cards, why not recognizing unusual patterns for elder accounts? Examination of how jurisdictions can better collaborated in the investigation, intervention and support of the dignity of our elders. Convening cross-jurisdictional study groups to develop best practices and guidelines for cross-jurisdictional issues.