

Law and Advocacy

For my advocacy effort, I chose to focus during this month of November with its focus on Thanksgiving, to raise awareness to the disparities that exist in mental and behavioral health services for tribal citizens compared to those available to the rest of the citizens of the United States. There is an excellent resource on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) web site that can be accessed here: <https://www.samhsa.gov/tribal-affairs>. Once I shared this article on social media, I looked up my local Congressional representative (here in Wake County it's Deborah Ross) and shared my concerns with her and the link to the article. To do this, I only had to do a quick Google search that allowed me to look up my Representative by zip code. Once I found Deborah's site, I was able to follow through by filling out her contact form with my personal information (I liked this because I felt like this gave legitimacy to my concerns) and then submit my info over the web. I let her know that I felt talking to her was a good first step to raising awareness and asked what we might do in NC to better serve the sizable number of tribal citizens who are also North Carolinians and deserving of our concern and care. Overall, it felt like a good cause to advocate for at a time when those of us who are NOT indigenous people celebrate a federal holiday predicated on the cooperation between the English settlers and Native Americans so many years ago. This issue is important to me as a future counselor because I would like to see ALL members of society receive equal access and assistance for mental health care, not just those people living in my suburb who I know largely have insurance and access.