



# WORKING TO SUPPORT WELLNESS

December 2020

## Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Quarterly Newsletter

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### The Great American Smokeout - Beginning a Journey to Quit

by Alberta Becenti

*The Great American Smokeout (GASO)* is observed every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in November each year to encourage smokers to quit tobacco. This year, the GASO fell on November 19, 2020. The American Cancer Society launched the campaign 40 years ago and made significant strides to reduce tobacco use in the general U.S. population. However, the American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations continue to have the highest smoking rate at 22.6% compared to 13.7% among general U.S. adults.

IHS observed GASO by encouraging tobacco users to make a commitment to living a commercial tobacco-free life by taking small steps or making a leap to quitting. Quitting tobacco is not easy. Tobacco products contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance that makes it hard for users to quit. It may take several attempts for users to kick the habit. Some are successful in quitting, while others return to smoking. Using Nicotine

Replacement Therapy (NRT) cessation aids such as nicotine gum, nicotine patch, nicotine nasal spray, nicotine inhaler, and nicotine lozenges can increase a person’s smoking cessation success, especially with counseling support. It is important to promote and provide cessation services to smokers who are ready to quit.

To increase access to resources, IHS collaborated with the National Cancer Institute to release SmokefreeTXT for AI/AN, a mobile messaging tool to provide 24/7 encouragement, advice, and tips for smokers who want to quit. Participants will receive 3-5 text messages per day to provide support in their effort to quit. They can receive additional support by texting a keyword such as CRAVE, MOOD, or SLIP to prevent a relapse.

IHS established a Task Force on Vaping to enhance documentation and monitoring of e-cigarette use and to develop culturally appropriate materials. Current efforts are underway to develop an e-cigarette toolkit that schools and youth organizations may use to increase awareness of the negative health effects of e-cigarette use. This effort was made possible through a partnership with the Public Health Service Nicotine Cessation Services Access Workgroup.

The Health Promotion/Disease Prevention program is working on additional activities that include customizing e-cigarette fact sheets for parents, providing quarterly webinars to share best/promising practices, and providing the Sacred Circle of Tobacco training that engages youth and their adult mentors to learn about sacred tobacco and the harms of commercial tobacco use.

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## The Great American Smokeout - Beginning a Journey to Quit (Continued)

To prevent a future generation of commercial tobacco users, we must use multiple approaches to prevent youth from accessing tobacco, promote tobacco-free policies, increase awareness of the negative health effects of its use while respecting the traditional use of tobacco, and provide cessation services to those who want to quit.

### How can we help smokers?

If you are a smoker or know someone who is a smoker, please call your local tobacco cessation services or text “**NATIVE**” to 47848 or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW if local services are not available.

Below are resources and strategies to address commercial tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke.

- Access [tobacco prevention posters](#)
- Access archived [tobacco prevention webinars](#)
- [Watch the video on how to assess for and document e-cigarette and vape users](#) on the health factor tab in the Electronic Health Record
- Contact [IHS Area HP/DP Coordinators](#) on how you can support tobacco prevention efforts

## Health Literacy: Empowering Our People in Health

By Stephanie Paz

It is important to provide clear health information to empower our patients and families to make informed decisions about their health. The Indian Health Service (IHS) and various global organizations emphasize the importance of health information accessibility and comprehension for individual and communities.

### Health Literacy 101

**Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information needed to make appropriate decisions about their health.** Health literacy requires a set of reading, listening, analytical, and decision-making skills, and the ability to apply these skills to health-related tasks. Certain populations such as older adults, minorities, immigrants and those with incomes at or below poverty level are most likely to experience limited health literacy. Such populations need help in navigating and understanding the complex health care system. Patients may be confused with medical advice, have difficulty in reading their prescription, struggle with health forms, or have limited access to providers within their community.

Limited health literacy is linked to increased health care costs, insufficient knowledge, medication errors, and inability to manage chronic health conditions – further underlining the importance for health care professionals to strengthen health literacy among their patients.

### *What is IHS doing to support health literacy?*

The IHS HQ Health Literacy Workgroup continues to plan and implement activities to improve health literacy. Some of the current efforts include:

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## Health Literacy: Empowering Our People in Health (continued)

- Developing and disseminating the [Let's TALK](#) poster
- Developing an online [IHS Introduction of Health Literacy Training](#) for employees
- Hosting a Writing and Designing Clear and Effective Plain Language Materials workshop
- Presenting at national/regional conferences to share ideas and strategies to address health literacy
- Pretesting educational materials with target audiences

### *What You Can Do to Promote Health Literacy and Empower Our People?*

To empower and protect our people, we must collectively work together to ensure health information and services are delivered in a way that is easy to understand. You can promote and support health literacy by:

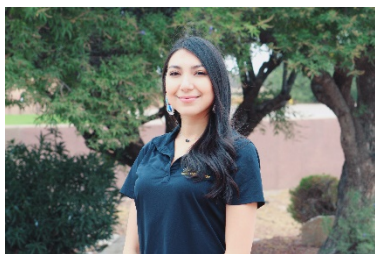
- View the archived webinar [“Using Everyday Words to Community: Fireside Chat”](#)
- Complete the online [IHS Introduction of Health Literacy Training](#)
- Practice [health literacy universal precaution](#) with all patients
- Visit the [IHS Healthcare Communications](#) page, which provides information and resources for improving health communication
- Learn about useful health literacy measurements tools through the [Health Literacy Tool Shed](#)
- [Assess health literacy](#) in your organization
- Review the [National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy](#)
- Utilize techniques such as [Let's TALK](#) and [Teach Back](#) to improve communication between provider and patient
- Assess your patient's health literacy through the [Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool \(PEMAT\)](#)

### **Related Content:**

[Assessing Health Literacy](#)

[Health Literacy: Educating Individuals, Families, and Communities](#)

[Navajo Wellness Model: Keeping the Cultural Teachings Alive to Improve Health](#)



Stephanie Paz is a Virtual Student Federal Service intern with the Division of Clinical & Preventive Services. Stephanie is an enrolled tribal member of Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo and Master of Public Health student in Health Management, Administration, and Policy at New Mexico State University. Stephanie received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Texas in El Paso. Stephanie is an Academic Success Advisor at the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo Department of Tribal Empowerment where she assists tribal members in obtaining their high school diplomas and pursuing higher education. She is an advocate for the betterment of health, education and law in Indian Country. Stephanie is especially passionate about sexual health education and promoting healthy behaviors among tribal youth.

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# Virtual Fitness Events During the Covid-19 Pandemic

By Elfrieda Barton, Navajo Area HP/DP Program

With essential social distancing guidelines implemented in the Navajo Nation, the Health Promotion/Disease Prevention (HP/DP) office for the Navajo Area Indian Health Service (NAIHS) has successfully transitioned to hosting virtual fitness events. With the rise of physical and mental health challenges associated with the pandemic, HP/DP fitness specialists have encouraged their team to adapt new strategies to promote physical fitness in their communities. Due to these changes, the HP/DP office plans to host this year's annual Veterans Day Run virtually.

During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the HP/DP led virtual fitness events with 168 participants. Many members of the community were grateful to bring awareness to breast cancer, and numerous participants expressed their excitement for the option to participate virtually. The NAIHS office plans to follow suit and host a virtual Veterans Day Run in the Navajo Area. Local challenges will include various options: a 1-mile run, a 5K, and a 10K. Participants will receive certificates of completion as well as medals.



Elfrieda leading a virtual fitness session

While the transition to virtual programming was an adjustment, virtual events have been widely successful. Community members in rural areas are now able to participate more easily at home, and virtual events have been able to reach more people. Also, recorded virtual sessions have allowed individuals who are not regularly able to attend fitness sessions during the day to participate in workouts in the evenings. Virtual participants interested in friendly competition are also able to connect through smart watches and fitness apps. The HPDP office believes the Veterans Day Run will be the beginning of a widely successful continuation of virtual fitness events.

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## Keep Traditional Tobacco Sacred



Text "**NATIVE**" to 47848 if you or someone you know wants to quit smoking. You will receive tips, advice, and encouragement to overcome challenges and stay motivated.

## Celebrate the holidays safely during COVID-19



Have a small dinner with only people who live in your home.



Connect with your family and friends by phone or text.



Share favorite recipes by text or phone.



Do a drive by wave to families and friends.

Take a walk or go for a hike with your family.



Watch a movie together.

## Moving Daily for Wellness

There are many benefits of regular physical activity:

- Increases energy
- Strengthens bones and muscles
- Improves sleep
- Decreases stress
- Reduces anxiety
- Improves coordination and balance
- Reduces weight gain
- Reduces blood pressure
- Lowers risk of heart disease
- Lowers risk of diabetes

Take a break from the screen (e.g., video, TV, computer) to take a walk, go hiking, do yard work, and do safe physical indoor activity (e.g., jumping jacks, walk/jog in place, yoga, line dancing, jingle dance).

## Division of Clinical & Community Health 2020-2021 Virtual Student Federal Service Interns

The [Office of Clinical and Preventive Services, Division of Clinical & Community Services](#), Health Promotion/Disease Prevention program is excited to be working with 10 [Virtual Student Federal Service](#) interns who are working on a variety of projects. The interns came on board in September 2020 and hit the ground running by working on developing social messaging, creating graphic designs and digital marketing materials, assisting with planning and implementation of activities, designing educational materials, and many additional projects.



**Garrett Garlock** grew up in Kasilof, Alaska. After moving to Pennsylvania, he now attends Westminster College (PA) where he studies Political Science and International Relations. He plans to work towards a JD/MPH dual degree upon graduation. He has a specific academic and professional interest in community health and looks forward to working with communities to bolster public health policy in the future.

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## Division of Clinical & Community Health

### 2020-2021 Virtual Federal Student Interns (continued)



**Melia Reyther-Espinoza** grew up in Denver, Colorado. She attends the University of Colorado Boulder (CU) as an undergraduate majoring in International Affairs with a minor in Leadership Studies. She currently holds a volunteer position as a Regional Director for the Borgen Project, a nonprofit organization. She has previously worked as a Teaching Fellow for Generation Teach, as a Peer Mentor for the Multicultural Leadership Scholar Program at CU, and various volunteer roles. On the side, Melia follows her interest in art and does commission work. Melia is excited to be interning for Indian Health Service and is looking forward to learning more about public health and helping tribal communities as much as she can.



**Marco Nandalal** is a junior at Drew University. He is majoring in computer science with a data science minor. He is a part of the Civic Scholars program and has been involved in volunteer projects his entire life. He is president of the Volunteer Without Borders club, where he plans and supervises domestic and international service trips for students.



**Rhena Lopez** is a third year pharmacy student in Houston, Texas. She is the Vice President of the APhA-ASP chapter at her university and she frequently participates in health fairs, brown bag events, and other health promotion activities. Rhena is excited for the opportunity to educate the community on health promotion and disease prevention. Through this initiative, she hopes to guide patients towards better health habits and ultimately create long-term pathways towards improved lifestyles. She is very grateful for this opportunity and looks forward to such a unique experience.



**Yaneidy Lora** is a recent graduate from the University of Maryland. She received her bachelor's degree in Communications and Public Relations. She is grateful for this opportunity to learn more about the healthcare industry and underserved communities.



**Marie Feliú** is a fourth-year undergraduate student interested in oncology and public health at the Florida International University's Honors College. She has a passion for community service and hopes to combine her love for research and service in a career dedicated to helping underserved populations.

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## Division of Clinical & Community Health

### 2020-2021 Virtual Federal Student Interns (continued)



**Enid Swatson** is a senior at the Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland, majoring in Biology with a minor in Public Health. Enid is thankful and thrilled for the opportunity to be interning for the Indian Health Service alongside other individuals who all share a passion for serving communities.



**Jessenia Falwell** is a senior at Shenandoah University pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Public Health. She has focused her academic research on diabetes and nutrition. She is grateful for this opportunity to help make Indian Health Service health care information more accessible.

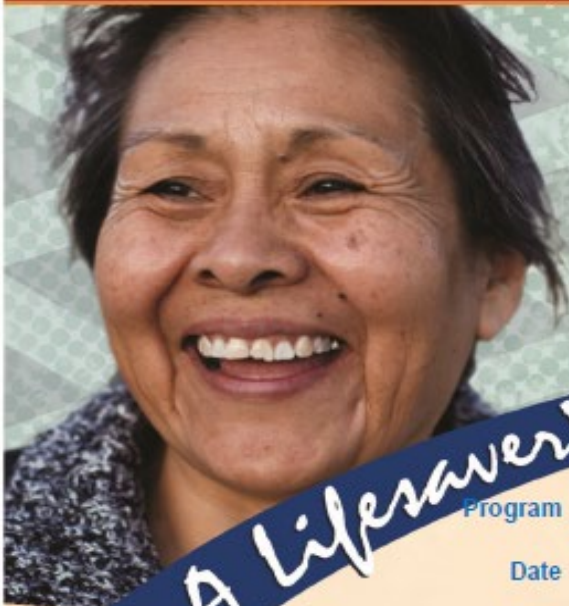


**Noi Sandler** is a current freshman student at Ohio State University. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a specialization in finance, as well as a minor in global public health. Noi is passionate about improving community health and is very excited to contribute to meaningful work with the Indian Health Service.



**Katherine Leggat-Barr** is a senior at Princeton University, majoring in the Public and International Affairs, while also pursuing a certificate in global health and completing pre-medical studies. She has completed significant research at Princeton about Native American populations and disparities in healthcare access and health outcomes.

**Nicotine Dependence Treatment Continuing Education & Certification Program**  
 Earn Certification to *utilize* an evidence-based nicotine dependence intervention to help save a life!  
[www.healthcarepartnership.org](http://www.healthcarepartnership.org)



**Evidence-based interventions that encourage *quitting* and prevent youth smoking continue to be underutilized.**

~ a Report of the Surgeon General, 2014

**Be A Lifesaver!**

**Program** **Basic Tobacco Intervention Skills Certification for Native Communities**

**Date** **February 3-4, 2021**

**Time** **12:00 pm - 4:00 pm (Eastern Time) each day**

**Location** **Virtual Training**

**Instructors** **Alberta Becenti, Michelle Archuleta**

**To register** Email registration form to [alberta.becenti@ihs.gov](mailto:alberta.becenti@ihs.gov)

**For information contact** Alberta Becenti (240.328.5540) [alberta.becenti@ihs.gov](mailto:alberta.becenti@ihs.gov)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Objectives:**

1. Engage commercial tobacco users in a culturally relevant and sensitive manner.
2. Assess for commercial tobacco use and exposure to secondhand/thirdhand smoke.
3. Conduct a culturally responsive integrated, stage-specific Five A Model brief intervention for health risk behavior change.
4. Demonstrate effective use of culturally adapted patient self-management resources to evoke confidence in a health risk behavior change.
5. Describe pharmacotherapy options for commercial tobacco dependence treatment.
6. Document details of interventions for treatment of commercial tobacco dependence.
7. Follow-along and follow-up with individuals using a disease management approach.
8. Refer patients/clients who use commercial tobacco to relevant intensive treatment services.
9. Connect Native people who are dependent on commercial tobacco with supportive resources.
10. Establish protocols to systematically prevent/treat commercial tobacco use and dependence.



This program has been approved for up to 7.5 contact hours (0.75 CDE) pharmacy continuing education credit by the Arizona Pharmacy Alliance, an ACPE approved provider. ACPE IAWM 0100-9999-15-001-104-P (knowledge-based activity). The Arizona Pharmacy Alliance is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education as a provider of continuing pharmacy education.



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# Calendar of Events

## February

February 3-4, 2021  
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm ET

Basic Tobacco Intervention Skills Certification Virtual Training  
For registration: Contact Alberta Becenti at [alberta.becenti@ihs.gov](mailto:alberta.becenti@ihs.gov) or call 240.328.5540

## March

March 18, 2021  
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm ET

Sacred Circle of Tobacco Virtual Training  
For registration: Contact Alberta Becenti at [alberta.becenti@ihs.gov](mailto:alberta.becenti@ihs.gov) or call 240.328.5540

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**Be a Wellness Warrior**  
Protect our families, elders, and communities!



- **Wear your mask (over nose and mouth)**
- **Wash your hands**
- **Watch your distance (stay 6 feet apart)**
- **Stay connected by phone or Skype**
- **Do a drive-by wave to families and friends**
- **Stay home**
- **Avoid crowds and gatherings**