



Working to Support Wellness

January 2024

Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Quarterly Newsletter

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Launching of the New Smoking Cessation Text Messaging Program

by Alberta Becenti

In collaboration with the National Cancer Institute’s (NCI) [Smokefree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov) Initiative, the Indian Health Service (IHS) launched a new, free text messaging program to help American Indians and Alaska Natives to quit smoking commercial tobacco.

While sacred tobacco is important in many American Indian tribes for prayer, healing, and ceremony, commercial tobacco is harmful to our health. SmokefreeNATIVE was developed by and for Native people to offer a culturally aligned, digital resource to improve access to evidence-based smoking cessation support.

SmokefreeNATIVE offers six weeks of smoking cessation assistance and support with up to two weeks of preparation messages. People who smoke and are ready to set a date to stop can enroll anytime [online](#) or by texting NATIVE to 47848. Participants will receive three to five messages each day with information, encouragement, and support to help them on their journey to quit smoking.

SmokefreeNATIVE was culturally adapted from [SmokefreeTXT](#), a text message program that has been used by more than 480,000 people who want to quit smoking. The IHS and NCI worked with experts from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health and the American Indian Cancer Foundation to develop a program that is aligned with the culture and needs of American Indian and Alaska Native communities, while also honoring the significance of traditional tobacco. The program braids together evidence-based smoking cessation support with key themes and content reflecting American Indian and Alaska Native cultural experiences, worldviews, and traditions.

People who smoke cigarettes are at risk for many adverse health effects, including cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cardiovascular disease, and poor reproductive health outcomes. On average, American Indian and Alaska Native people have the highest prevalence of cigarette smoking compared to all other racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Heart disease, cancer, and stroke are leading causes of death in these communities.

Mobile health tools like SmokefreeNATIVE are advantageous as they have the potential to reach more people than other behavioral interventions and are often less costly. Cell phone ownership is widespread and texting is a common activity among users.



Launching of the New Smoking Cessation Text Messaging Program (Continued)

This collaboration is an important step towards reducing the nation’s cancer death rate by half within 25 years, with the goal of improving the lives of people with cancer and cancer survivors as part of President Biden’s 2022 reignition of the [Cancer Moonshot initiative](#).

NCI’s [Smokefree.gov Initiative](#) provides tobacco cessation information, encouragement, and support to more than 7 million people annually through online content and tools, text message programs, smartphone applications, and social media accounts.

Just Move It – All Elders Moving

by LCDR Whitney Moseley



To support the Department of Health and Human Services’ “Health, Nutrition, and Hunger” initiative, the IHS Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Program (HP/DP) partnered with the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic, Southern Plains Tribal Health Board, Absentee Shawnee Tribe, Sac and Fox Nation, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes to provide a day of focus on elder fitness, nutrition, and brain health.

There were 87 elders in active attendance for this event held on September 19, 2023, at Camp Trivera in Oklahoma City, OK. Elders engaged in a variety of exercises that included chair volleyball, chair exercises, and chair dance steps. Guest speakers provided education on brain health, mental health and aging, cancer screenings, and immunizations.

Navajo Area Provides Maternal and Child Health Commercial Tobacco Intervention Trainings

by Lisa Chee

Navajo Area provided three specialized Basic Tobacco Intervention Skills (BTIS) trainings focused on Maternal and Child Health from October to December 2023. The trainings are being provided in partnership with the University of Arizona HealthCare Partnership Tobacco Dependence Treatment Continuing Education Programs to address and prevent commercial tobacco use among pregnant and postpartum women in native communities.

The training focuses on how to screen and assess female patients for commercial tobacco use and exposure to secondhand/third-hand smoke, explain effects of tobacco use and exposure, describe pharmacotherapy options, and how to provide follow-up and support management.



University of Arizona Launches an Updated Basic Tobacco Intervention Skills for Native Communities

by LCDR Whitney Moseley



The Area HP/DP Coordinators participated in the launching of the updated BTIS for Native Communities guidebooks, to recertify as BTIS instructors using the new materials, and to provide constructive feedback for potential future integration. The University of Arizona HealthCare Partnership Tobacco Dependence Treatment Continuing Education Programs hosted the meeting on December 6-7, 2023, in Tucson, Arizona.

Moving Daily for Wellness

Getting daily physical activity has many benefits for your health, mind, and spirit. It is a good idea to take a break from the screen (e.g., video games, TV, computer) to go for a walk with your children, family, co-worker, or neighbor. Physical activity keeps your thinking and learning sharp and helps you sleep better.

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
- Lowers risk for certain cancer

Remember to take a wellness break by walking, hiking, working in the yard or doing safe indoor activities.



Navajo Area Prepares for New Wellness Center

by Lisa Chee



Left to right front row: Daryl Dineyazhe-Toya, Candace Tsingine, Jacy Lee, Karen Arviso, Marjorie Werito, Jeffery Morris. Left to right back row: Glenn W. Tsingine, Fern Detsoi, Orlando Johnson.

The Navajo Area Crownpoint HP/DP team broke ground for their new wellness center on October 5th, 2023. The wellness center has been supported by various Navajo Area IHS programs to assure the success of its projected opening in 2024. The facility will be a place for patients to learn and be supported in their health journey, through specialized fitness plans, nutrition education, and links to additional preventative services.

Navajo Area Provides First Bee Iina doo Na'nitin Hane (Life Teachings Through Traditional Story) Conference to Community and Professionals

by Lisa Chee

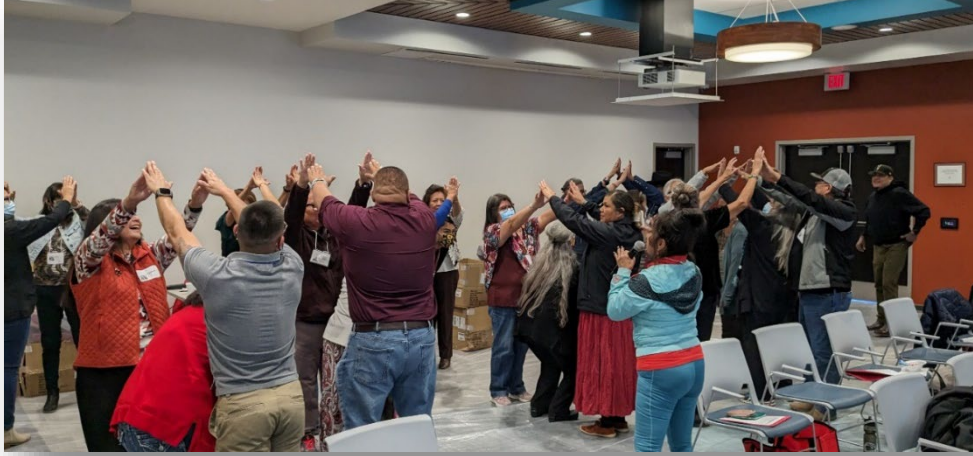
The Navajo Area Service Unit HP/DP teams formed a Bee Iina doo Na'nitin Hane work group in 2022. The work group includes traditional practitioners, Navajo Wellness Model instructors, and public health professionals to provide and develop cultural education and information to the Navajo Area population.

The HP/DP team hosted a three-day conference for the community and utilized the Navajo Wellness Model to share information, which included Dine Creation Stories, Dine Healthy Aging, and Dine Leadership. The conference is an additional step to utilizing the Navajo Wellness Model instructors to provide culturally appropriate information to the community in an effort to encourage and support healthy lifestyles choices.



Navajo Area Launches Public Health Workforce Development Project with Johns Hopkins Center for Indigenous Health Certificate Course

by Lisa Chee



The Navajo Area HP/DP partnered with the Johns Hopkins Center for Indigenous Health to provide instruction in the Interdisciplinary Approach to Understanding the Health of American Indians certificate course to Navajo Area Public Health staff.

The five-day course was hosted in January 2024 and focused on understanding of epidemiological, socioeconomic, political, environmental, and other factors that influence the health of Indigenous populations and how culturally congruent and interdisciplinary approaches can be applied to address these health issues. The partnership is a part of a larger Navajo Area Public Health workforce development and succession project, which includes standardized Public Health training, connection and support of formalized education in public health, and formalized agreements to support internships for local college and university public health students, to sustain public health infrastructure at Navajo Area Indian Health Service.

February is National Cancer Prevention Month

Let's spread the word about the importance of getting preventive screening, and ways to reduce risk for cancer by:

- Getting preventive screening appropriate for age and gender
- Avoiding commercial tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke
- Moving every day
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Eating healthy
- Avoiding alcohol or drink in small amounts



Albuquerque Area *Just Move It*

by Theresa Clay



The Ute Mountain Ute (UMU) Health Center partnered with the UMU tribal Special Diabetes Program for Indians and the Area HP/DP program to host a *Just Move It (JMI)* walk/run and a presentation on Employee Wellness policy on September 26, 2023. There were 27 participants. At the conclusion of the events, the participants appeared uplifted and ready to start a four-week *JMI* movement challenge.

Albuquerque Area Halloween

by Theresa Clay

On Halloween, the UMU Health Center and the ABQ Area HP/DP program held a *JMI* walk and pot luck. They completed the four-week *JMI* challenge with staff from the UMU Health Center. The *JMI* challenge was held from September 26 – October 24, with 5,275 minutes of activity submitted.



Left to right: Leanna Van Keuren, Rita Lewis, Lance Carpenter, Janette Harrell were the UMU Health Center “Just Move It” Champions for the four-week challenge.



Colorectal Cancer Pilot Project at Cass Lake Service Unit

by Lucinda Charleston

Cass Lake Indian Service Unit (CLSU) is located in the Northwoods region of Minnesota on the Leech Lake Reservation, home to more than 9,200 tribal members. The CLSU has an active user population of 12,000 patients. In addition to the day-to-day busyness of CLSU, a small team of two nurses and a pharmacy lead, work diligently to promote colorectal cancer screening. To improve numbers screened, the team continuously learn about Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe culture, the community, and incorporate the importance of colorectal screening and education.

The target population for CLSU colorectal cancer screening patients are 45 to 75-year-old. One lesson learned is that many of the CLSU patients do not have good contact information: some are not up-to-date or the contact information belongs to family or neighbors. As a result, the team narrowed the target group to 1,350 individuals with current contact information, a primary care provider, and a medical record at Cass Lake Hospital for at least the past 3 years. One goal in the pilot project is to create an informed community to increase awareness of colorectal cancer and the importance of screening. Patient educational flyers were created: “What to Know About Colon Cancer,” “Importance of Preventive Screening,” and “How to Use Insure One Stool Kit.” All patients of the CLSU, have access to the “What to Know About Colon Cancer” educational material. Once a patient indicates they want a kit, either in person or by phone, the second flyer (“Importance of Preventive Screening”) is mailed out to them along with the kit. Some patients indicated they didn’t want a call or reminder to test, so the CLSU team focused efforts on engaging other health care providers to assist with colon cancer testing and information during scheduled clinic appointments. An informative health booth is set up near the entrance of the hospital and additional health information is posted on a bulletin board near the Emergency Department waiting area to further increase awareness.

The CLSU team continues to be innovative in promoting colorectal cancer screening by mailing reminder postcards, printing educational materials for patients and staff, placing orders for colon cancer stickers with prevention messaging, developing information for billboards, providing sandwich stand messages, and t-shirts for nursing staff to promote colon cancer prevention. One important step that remains valuable is the approved procedure policy. Another accomplishment is seeing the increased collaboration among CLSU healthcare providers in promoting and advocating colorectal cancer screening during patient care interactions. The team continues to work together despite barriers, in hopes to provide a sufficient outcome in how to effectively work with our American Indians and Alaska Natives throughout Indian Country.

Immediate Benefits of Quitting Smoking

When you quit smoking, the [health benefits](#) begin almost immediately.

- 20 minutes after quitting: Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- 12 hours after quitting: The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- 2 weeks to 3 months after quitting: Your circulation improves and lung function increases.
- 1 to 9 months after quitting: Coughing and shortness of breath decrease.
- 1 year after quitting: Your increased risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- 5 to 15 years after quitting: Your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker.



Health Observance

JANUARY 2024

Maternal Health Awareness Day

January 23

FEBRUARY 2024

American Heart Month

February

National Cancer Prevention Month

February

World Cancer Day

February 4

National Wear Red Day

February 3

Heart Failure Awareness Week

February 11 -17

MARCH 2024

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

March

National Nutrition Month

March

Brain Awareness Week

March 11 - 17

[Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Program](#)

[Division of Clinical and Community Services \(DCCS\)](#)

[Office of Clinical and Preventive Services \(OCPS\)](#)

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