

**INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE, DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST OF 2012
LT LISA NAKAGAWA**



INTRODUCTION

The Indian Health Service/California Area Office (IHS/CAO), Office of Environmental Health and Engineering, nominates LT Lisa Nakagawa for the IHS 2012 Environmental Health Specialist of the Year. Since 2009, she has served as an IHS Environmental Health Officer (EHO) providing direct environmental health services to 10 federally recognized American Indian tribes (5,488 population) in central California. She also serves as the Area Injury Prevention Program Manager and provides injury prevention leadership to four EHOs and 83 federally recognized American Indian tribes.

SPECIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2012, LT Nakagawa made significant environmental health and injury prevention contributions in tribal communities. The following are examples of her special accomplishments:

- **Injury Prevention Program:** In 2012, LT Nakagawa graduated from the IHS Injury Prevention (IP) Specialist Fellowship. As a result of her participation, she elected to complete an evaluation of the California Area's IP mini-grant program. Since 1991, the IHS/CAO IP program has provided funds to Tribal health programs for purchase of interventions that support use of evidence-based strategies. Interventions have included use of child safety seats, bicycle helmets, and smoke detectors. LT Nakagawa conducted key informant interviews and surveys with 19 Tribal health programs to determine the effectiveness of these resources. In addition to providing valuable feedback on the mini-grant program, more than 37% of key informants identified carbon monoxide detectors, elder fall interventions, and enhanced training as significant needs in their communities. With this information, LT Nakagawa immediately prepared a plan to expand the mini-grant program. LT Nakagawa met with representatives from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and established a partnership to build capacity for elder strength and balance programs in tribal communities. This resulted in the first ever "Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance" train-the-trainer course being held at the California Rural Indian Health Board (CRIHB). Approximately 15 representatives from the CRIHB, Greenville Rancheria, Karuk Tribe, Tule River, Reno Sparks Indian Colony, and the Sacramento Native American Health Center attended the course and received "Instructor Certificates". LT Nakagawa then selected one Tribal health program to participate in an elder fall prevention demonstration project in 2013. This pilot project will implement evidence-based strategies and the results will be used to make fall interventions a key part of the IHS/CAO IP mini-grant program.

- **Injury Prevention Racial Misclassification Study:** While participating in the Fellowship, LT Nakagawa collaborated with the California Tribal Epi Center and initiated a descriptive injury research study. This study will describe injury deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency department admissions using data from the IHS and CDPH. The study will also identify a new racial misclassification adjustment factor since racial misclassification has historically been a significant issue in California. The results of this study will be used to publish a new “Atlas of Injuries” for California in 2013.
- **Program Support:** LT Nakagawa completed one of the highest survey completion percentages of all IHS/CAO Environmental Health Specialists. The following are additional examples of her outstanding work:
 - Only staff member to complete EH surveys at 100% of assigned food service facilities,
 - Served as Project Officer for 3 IHS Tribal IP Cooperative Agreement Program sites, and
 - Authored multiple standard operating policies and procedures; resulted in written policies for conducting sanitary surveys and inspection of temporary food service establishments.

PROFESSIONALISM

LT Nakagawa has a BS degree in Environmental Health from California State University-Fresno and a MPH in Environmental Health from San Diego State University. She is a certified child passenger safety technician and a graduate of the IHS IP Specialist Fellowship.

LT Nakagawa is an active member of two national workgroups: The DEHS Workforce Development Team and the IHS Injury Surveillance Workgroup. She published two injury prevention articles in the January and July issues of the IHS/CAO Newsletter. LT Nakagawa conducted a professional presentation on her fellowship project at the IHS Injury Prevention Fellowship Symposium in Rockville and is an active injury prevention mentor to both IHS staff and tribal injury prevention staff within the IHS/CAO.

In 2012, LT Nakagawa served as Secretary for the local Sierra Commissioned Officer Association Branch and was an aide-de-camp for the Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Howard K. Koh, during a recent visit to California.

INNOVATION

“Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance” is recommended by the CDC as an evidence-based fall prevention program. Because of LT Nakagawa’s efforts four tribes and two Tribal health programs now have the capacity to provide this stand-alone effective strategy.

LT Nakagawa utilized the public health approach and ten essential services to guide all aspects of her work. She continues to monitor health status through her injury surveillance efforts; and mobilize partnerships in her work as illustrated by collaboration with the CDPH, the California Tribal Epi Center, and IP program representatives at all 26 Indian Health Programs. LT Nakagawa is making use of evaluation concepts as demonstrated by her completed evaluation project and supports policy development that benefits the overall EH program.

SUMMARY

Without reservation, the IHS/CAO proudly nominates LT Lisa Nakagawa for the Indian Health Service 2012 Environmental Health Specialist of the Year.