



WORKING TO SUPPORT WELLNESS

March 2021

Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Quarterly Newsletter

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Engaging Youth to Address Commercial Tobacco

By Yaneidy Lora

The Indian Health Service (IHS) Health Promotion/Disease Prevention (HP/DP) program is offering activities to observe the Take Down Tobacco National Day of Action on April 1, a day dedicated to promoting a tobacco-free world and raising awareness about the harmful effects of smoking tobacco. On this day, youth are encouraged to speak up against the big tobacco companies who use misleading marketing tactics in attempt to get them addicted. Take Down Tobacco, a fresh take on Kick Butts Day, has been held every year since 1996 and has brought together students, teachers, and health advocates alike to promote anti-smoking.

Commercial tobacco use among American Indian and Alaska Native people continues to remain unchanged, while it has significantly declined among the general U.S. population.

E-cigarette use among Native youth is higher than all youth in this country. The 2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey Data reported 40.4% of Native high school students and 16.1% of

Native middle school students were current e-cigarette users. Commercial tobacco use is one of the behavioral risk factors that contribute to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and stroke.

The HP/DP program is providing a half-day Sacred Circle of Tobacco virtual training on March 18. The Sacred Circle of Tobacco is designed to engage youth in taking lead roles to bring awareness of the traditional use of sacred tobacco. This training will prepare adult mentors and individuals on strategies to recruit and train youth, serve as supportive mentors, facilitate interactive training using stories, discussion, and interviews, and to encourage youth to develop a plan to reach their peers and communities.

The IHS and the Public Health Service Nicotine Access Services Workgroup is developing an e-toolkit for schools and youth organizations to use to increase awareness. Please visit the HP/DP website to access posters, infographics, and information, and to reach out to your IHS Area HP/DP Coordinator to obtain more information on IHS awareness campaigns and activities.

Here are just a few ways you can participate in this movement:

- Sign a pledge to quit smoking tobacco

Engaging Youth to Address Commercial Tobacco (Continued)

- Talk to your children and loved ones about the dangers of smoking, secondhand smoke, and vaping
- Learn about the variety of e-cigarette products on the market that resemble everyday items (e.g., USB flash drives, pens, or packages resembling other food products)
- Organize a fun virtual event with your community such as educational jeopardy
- Visit the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids website to learn more about the movement and gain access to resources, webinars, activity ideas, and more: <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/>

Smoking and COVID-19

This may be a good time to quit. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), individuals who smoke or who have a history of smoking may experience more life-threatening cases of COVID-19. Smoking can lead to lung disease or lung cancer that may put individuals at more of a risk for a severe case of COVID-19. Individuals who vape regularly are more likely to test positive for COVID-19 than those who do not.

Related Content

[Tobacco Prevention](#)

[Improve Your Health](#)

[E-cigarette Use](#)



Yaneidy Lora is a Virtual Student Federal Service Intern with the Division of Clinical & Preventive Services, Health Promotion/Disease Prevention program. She is a recent graduate from the University of Maryland. Ms. Lora 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.



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.

Suicide Prevention Training: Assisting A Tribal Chemical Dependency Program

By Paula Carter

American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations have the highest suicide rates in the United States. Access to care, economic barriers, and social stigma towards mental health diagnosis and treatment are just a few of the myriad of obstacles facing AI/AN populations when it comes to addressing mental health disparities in Indian Country. The Billings Area Office (BAO) Indian Health



Service' Health Promotion/ Disease Prevention (HP/DP) is committed to assisting our tribal communities with preventing suicide. A tribal substance recovery programs' goal

was to make suicide prevention training a priority for their staff and administration, which led to the BAO HP/DP Coordinator to schedule a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for the facility. Two goals that the HP/DP program wanted to meet when assisting the recovery program was to bring the training directly to the tribal community and to supply training materials for the staff.

The Billings Area Office of Health Care Programs (OHCP), which includes Behavioral Health, uses a team approach when assisting tribal and urban facilities with their health care needs. As a team, the OHCP Behavioral Specialist/Licensed Addiction Counselor and the HP/DP Coordinator, visited this particular recovery program to meet them in person and get an initial assessment of needs. Once there was a clear idea of specific needs, OHCP administration advised on the plan and MHFA materials were procured. Since the MHFA program requires two trainers for the 8-hour training, HP/DP built a collaboration with the state's extension office that employs several MHFA trainers, this partnership supplied the co-instructors for the MHFA trainings. It was important to be flexible with the scheduling of the training and allow the recovery program to decide when the training would take place. The MHFA training was successfully completed and there was discussion of what the next steps would be for the facility in terms of their suicide prevention goals and objectives.

It is an honor to be able to assist the Billings Area Office tribal and urban health care programs in suicide prevention training. It is rewarding to be able to share suicide prevention education and skills with front-line health care providers who desire to bring recovery and safety to their community members, as they make their communities healthier overall.

Quotes from the Training Attendees

"I want my staff trained in suicide prevention first and foremost."

"I feel more confident after this training, to be able to assist someone in crisis."

"Thank you for training us today, I enjoyed the activities that were planned into the training."

"I love my community and want to be able to help those who are struggling."

California Area Highlight: Desert Sage Youth Regional Treatment Center

By Beverly Calderon

Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center is one of 12 IHS Youth Regional Treatment Centers, providing American Indian and Alaska Native youth residential treatment services for substance abuse and co-occurring disorders. As a federally operated facility in the California Area, Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center is accredited by the Joint Commission.



Desert Sage assist youth by meeting them where they are and helping them to discover their unique path to recovery. The treatment programs focus on traditional knowledge and culture to support youth in their individual path towards wellness. This includes the impact that nutrition and healthy eating have during recovery, as poor nutritional status is shown to impede physical and psychological healing. Additionally, optimal nutrition and healthy eating support the prevention of type 2 diabetes, which is shown to be nine times higher in American Indian and Alaska Native youth.

In response to the central role, that nutrition and healthy eating have in healing, and in the prevention of type 2 diabetes, efforts were launched to enhance nutrition interventions at Desert Sage. This year, staff began collaborating on expanding clinical nutrition interventions. This includes implementing nutrition assessments and nutrition counseling, developing nutrition and diabetes prevention education curriculum, enhancing nutrition content of meals served, and operationalizing a diet manual that includes therapeutic diets. The



project aims to support the resident's clinical care by resolving or improving nutritionally impacted conditions, with dietary interventions based on recognized standards. The overall objective is to counter poor nutritional status, which can lead to vitamin deficiencies and a host of health issues. The project recognizes the positive impact that optimal nutrition and healthy eating have on clinical outcomes. This

includes addressing that poor nutrition can be a component of substance abuse, and that addictive substances can contribute a host of nutrition deficiencies. This collaboration supports clinical services, which are rooted in culturally relevant and holistic care. More about Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5486W3urvKA&feature=youtu.be>.

We Can Prevent, Detect, and Treat Early



Together, we can all prevent, detect and treat cancer early. Take action by not using commercial tobacco, maintaining a healthy weight, getting daily physical activity, and talking to your doctor about getting an early screening for cancer.

What to look for:

- A change in bowel habits
- A persistent sore throat that does not heal
- Any unusual bleeding or discharge
- A lump found anywhere on the body
- An obvious change in a wart or mole
- A persistent cough or hoarseness
- Any persistent difficulty with swallowing or indigestion

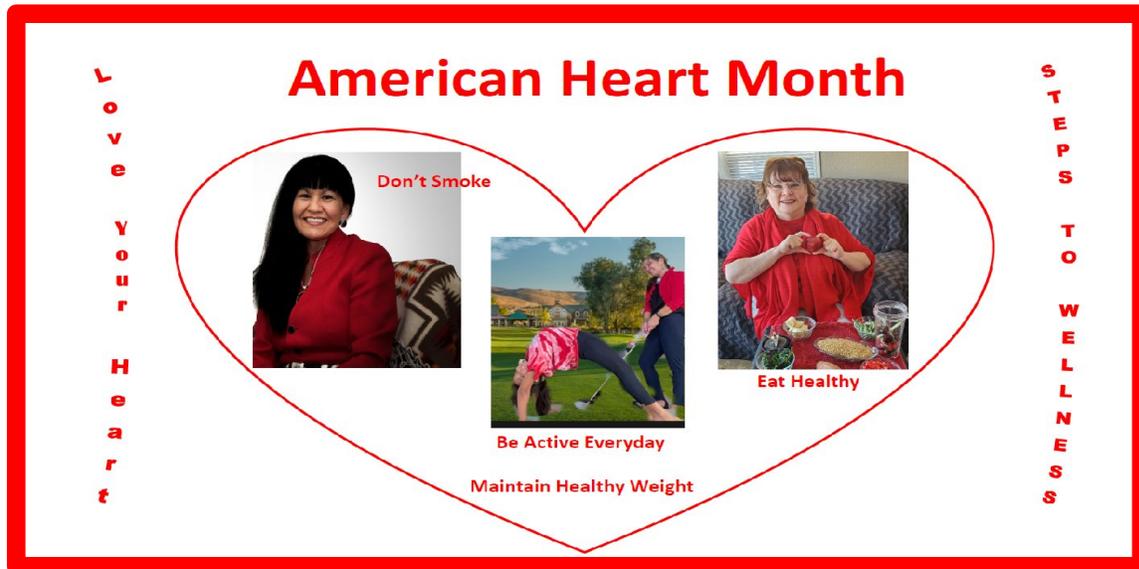
These could be symptoms could be any number of things, but it is always best to be on the safe side and take steps for cancer prevention.

Below are resources to learn more about cancer:

- [Access the cancer prevention posters](#)
- [View archived webinar](#)
- [Access posters to promote the IHS SmokefreeTXT messaging program](#) for American Indians and Alaska Natives to help people quit tobacco
- Visit the American Cancer Society to [Learn about cancer and preventive screening recommendations](#)
[Access the CDC cancer prevention campaign](#)

Your Heart is The Beat to Your Drum. Protect it!

By Stephanie Paz



Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and affects American Indians and Alaska Natives at an alarming rate. A variety of influences can raise your risk for heart disease. Although there are some factors you cannot control, there are many you can. In this brief article, you will learn about the risk factors of heart disease and how you can prevent it.

Heart disease risk factors you cannot control:

- **Sex.** Certain influences can affect heart disease risk differently in women than men, such as hormonal differences.
- **Age.** The risk for heart disease increases, as you get older.
- **Race or ethnicity.** Just as is the case for American Indians and Alaska Natives, certain groups have higher a higher risk for heart disease than others.
- **Family history.** The risk is greater if a close family member developed heart disease at an early age.

What you can do to lower your risk of heart disease:

- **Choose healthy eating.** Healthy meals, snacks, and drinks can prevent heart disease and its complications. It is important to eat fewer processed foods and plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Limit saturated fats, foods in high sodium, and added sugars.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight or having obesity can increase your risk for heart disease. Extra weight can put extra stress on the heart and blood vessels. Controlling your weight through a healthy diet and exercise can lower your risk.
- **Engage in regular physical activity.** Physical activity can help you control your weight and lower your blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and blood cholesterol.

Your Heart is The Beat to Your Drum. Protect it! (Continued)

What you can do to lower your risk of heart disease:

- **Control your blood pressure.** High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease, and usually has no symptoms. It is crucial to get your blood pressure checked regularly – preferably once a year for most adults and more often if you have high blood pressure.
- **Manage your diabetes.** If you have diabetes, your risk of diabetic heart disease is doubled. Monitor your blood sugar levels carefully and talk with your health care team about treatment options. Your doctor can provide recommendations for certain lifestyle changes to help keep your blood sugar under control.
- **Limit your alcohol intake.** Drinking too much alcohol can increase your blood pressure and cause weight gain. Both of these raise your risk for heart disease.
- **Don't smoke.** Smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease. If you do not smoke, do not start. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk for heart disease.
- **Speak to your doctor.** Your doctor can help you develop an action plan to adopt healthy behaviors that can prevent heart disease.

References

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Prevent Heart Disease](#)

[U.S. National Library of Medicine, Medline Plus – How to Prevent Heart Disease](#)

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**

Interns Corner: What Are the Interns Working On?



Garrett Garlock

My name is Garrett Garlock and I am a junior undergraduate student at Westminster College in Western Pennsylvania. I have been lucky to have the opportunity to work on a wide variety of projects since joining IHS as a VSFS Intern in September 2020. Because of the ongoing pandemic, I have gotten the unique opportunity to learn and assist on unprecedented messaging and mitigation efforts. I am especially grateful to have had the chance to connect with various Area HP/DP Coordinators to help share their success stories on the HP/DP webpage. I have also enjoyed having the

opportunity to work with my fellow interns from across the country. I look forward to continuing working on future projects with the HP/DP team!



Stephanie Paz

I'm Stephanie Paz. As an American Indian and MPH student in Health Management, Administration, and Policy at New Mexico State University, in a state that comprises over 20 tribal communities, it is important for me to enhance my knowledge of and experience in American Indian and Alaska Native health. My ultimate goal is to improve health outcomes in Indian Country through preventive measures and promotion of healthy behaviors. The Virtual Student Federal Service Internship with the IHS' Division of Clinical and

Community Services (DCCS) has increased my expertise and knowledge in the field of public health and its importance in Indian health. As a 2020-2021 intern, I had the opportunity to work on a variety of health promotion projects that focus on social media messaging, patient education materials, presentations, and more. The following is the work that I had the privilege to be a part of with the DCCS.

In my work with the IHS National HIV/HCV Program Coordinator Rick Haverkate, and HIV/Hep C teleconsultant for IHS/Tribal/Urban Clinicians' Brigg Reilley, I researched community health worker (CHW) programs, which aim to change community knowledge and attitudes regarding the stigma and education on HIV and Hep C. Studying the frameworks and methods used by such CHW programs in underserved populations, I wrote a literature review with recommendations to build such CHW approaches for people living with HIV in AI/AN communities. I also assisted Rick Haverkate with a "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Terminology" cheat sheet.

In collaboration with Michelle Archuleta, IHS National Community Health Program Coordinator and National Community Health Representative Consultant, I assisted in the newly revised Health Education Program webpage. I developed the *Resources and Strategies for Health Priorities* section of the page, which provides information on how to approach the five-priority health issues in AI/AN communities: diabetes prevention, alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, cancer prevention, suicide prevention, and HIV/AIDS/HCV/STI.

I created and presented case studies for two Project ECHO sessions in collaboration with the University of New Mexico: *Adapting to Virtual vs. In-Person Communication* and *Domestic Violence and COVID-19*. Each case study provided attendees with scenarios that required a team-based solution approach.

Interns Corner: What Are the Interns Working On? (Continued)

For social media messaging, I helped create a mask campaign for the Navajo Nation Department of Health's Health Education Program that emphasizes: *Stay Home. Wear Your Mask. Protect Your Elders.*

As the internship comes to an end, I am appreciative of the guidance and experience the DCCS team, other IHS divisions, and IHS partners have provided. I look forward to continuing the internship and learning more through it!

Calendar of Events

April

April 13-14, 2021
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm EDT
Circle of Life Virtual Training
For registration: Contact Alberta Becenti at alberta.becenti@ihs.gov or call 240.328.5540

April

April 21-22, 2021
12:00 pm - 4:30 pm EDT
Basic Tobacco Intervention Skills Virtual Training
For registration: Contact Alberta Becenti at alberta.becenti@ihs.gov or call 240.328.5540

National Health Observance

March 1-31	National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month National Nutrition Month National Kidney Month
April 1-30	National Autism Awareness Month Alcohol Awareness Month
April 5-11	National Child Abuse Prevention Month Oral Cancer Awareness Month
	National Public Health Week
May 1-31	American Stroke Awareness Month Hepatitis Awareness Month
May 9-15	National High Blood Pressure Education Month National Physical Fitness and Sports Month
	National Women's Health Week

March is the National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

By Enid Swatson

Each month we feature select National Health Observances that align with our priorities for improving health across the nation. In March, we are raising awareness about colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancer is cancer that occurs in the colon or rectum. Sometimes it is called colon cancer, for short. Sometimes abnormal growths, called *polyps*, form in the colon or rectum. Over time, some polyps may turn into cancer. Screening can often find colorectal cancer early, when it is small and has not spread. Regular screening can even prevent colorectal cancer.

Who gets Colorectal Cancer?

Men and women both can get colorectal cancer. It is most often found in people who are 50 years and older.

What can I do to reduce my risk?

- A diet low in animal fats and high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains may reduce risk of colorectal cancer.
- Get at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate physical activity each week or 75 to 150 minutes of high intensity activity (running, jogging) each week.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Do not use (commercial) tobacco.

What test are available?

Talk to your doctor about which test are right for you.

- Fecal occult blood test (FOBT) to find blood in the stool.
- Fecal immunochemical test (FIT) to find blood in the stool.
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy is when the doctor checks for polyps or cancer inside the rectum and lower third of the colon.
- Colonoscopy is when the doctor uses a long, thin, and flexible lighted tube to check for polyps or cancer inside the rectum and the entire colon. During the test, the doctor can find and remove most polyps and some cancers.



Enid Swatson is a fourth-year undergraduate student at Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland majoring in Biology with a minor in Public Health. She is passionate about medicine and global health, especially for underserved communities. She has previously worked as an intern in clinical settings at the Johns Hopkins Medicine Sibley Memorial Hospital ICU unit and the Prampram Polyclinic Maternal Health Center in Ghana. In her spare time, she and her sister produce a science Magazine called *Earth Explained* for middle school students in Ghana and Enid enjoys learning Japanese. Enid is thankful and thrilled for the opportunity to be interning for the IHS alongside other individuals who all share a passion for serving unique communities to address health disparities.



Circle of Life training

What is the Circle of Life?

The American Cancer Society Circle of Life Initiative was developed with American Indian and Alaska Native communities to provide cancer education using a holistic and culturally tailored approach for individuals, families, and tribes to make healthy choices and stay well.

At the end of this training, the participants will be able to:

- 1) Identify at least three healthy choices to reduce cancer risk.
- 2) List the different types of cancer and treatment options.
- 3) Provide cancer education activities using a holistic and cultural tailored approach for individuals, families, and communities.

Date: April 13-14, 2021
Time: 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)
Location: Virtual Training

To register: Please email registration to alberta.becenti@ihs.gov or call Alberta at 240.328.5540. Registration closes on April 6, 2021.

Name:	_____	Title:	_____		
Organization:	_____				
Work Address:	_____				
City:	_____	State:	_____	Zip Code:	_____
Work Phone:	_____	Work Email:	_____		