



Stay in the circle...

Greetings

Native People for Cancer Control's monthly newsletter is becoming Partnerships for Native Health's quarterly newsletter! As a feature of our quarterly newsletter, we will highlight other American Indian and Alaska Native research projects within University of Washington's Center for Clinical and Epidemiological Research as well as information about ongoing Partnerships for Native Health outreach, education, training and research projects.

Greetings! I hope you're easing into 2010 and are looking forward to spring, like we are here in Seattle! We had a busy winter, as I'm sure you have as well. In December, we reapplied for our National Cancer Institute Community Network Program funds. Our current Native People for Cancer Control (NPCC) grant ends this spring. We'll know in June if we're refunded for another five years to do the work we love – we're keeping our fingers crossed!

During that same time period, we worked with over 8 tribal and state agencies to plan a Native Tobacco Policy Summit. It was held February 18th and 19th, 2010 in Seattle, and over 120 individuals from Alaska to South Dakota attended. We'll be writing up a Tobacco Policy Summit summary report, so look for that in our next newsletter.

We're thrilled to add a new staff member to our NPCC team, Laura Revels (see article below). Laura brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, and will be working with us on digital storytelling workshops, updating and disseminating Cancer 101 – A Cancer Education and Training Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives, and on creating trainings for Native cancer support group facilitators.

As always, please be in touch with your ideas, comments and suggestions, regarding any of our projects. Here's to a new year full of health, laughter, and adventures! - Carrie (cnass@u.washington.edu)

Introducing: **Laura Revels**



Hello, Wa.see.ahtee, Quyana. I am Laura Revels, a Tlingit/Mexican from Southeast Alaska. I am Kaagwaantaan, Eagle from the Wolf House, and was raised most of my life in Alaska.

I moved here on Valentine's Day 2010 from Anchorage, Alaska, where I was a Program Manager for NPCC at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. I have been involved with Tribal organizations for the last 20+ years, and recently I also became a writer for Indian Country Today, where I

write a monthly column about surviving cancer and its treatments.

I have a pretty darn good sense of humor; I love storytelling, taking pictures and turning them into inspirational posters, woodcarving and beading. I am also a proud mom of two great kids, Taija and Sage, who are both attending college.

So what brings me to NPCC? I am passionate about breaking the silence around cancer and its treatments through education and storytelling – I am such a strong believer in the power of storytelling that I am also a Digital Storyteller Trainer and help others to find and share their stories.

Our cultures are rich in oral traditions, and stories have been used since the beginning of time to record events, share knowledge and pass on traditions. We all have stories that we heard when we were young about different myths and legends from our cultures. I

'member one that my grandma told me when I was real young. She used to tell us if we did not listen or behave, the Thunderbird would swoop down and take us away. When we were little kids, this made us leery of big birds flying over our heads!

My grandma used to tell us such stories that used to scare us. Some I think were a mixture of Tlingit myth and real events; some were just grandma myth.

It is funny how some of our legends and myths from our childhood stick with us all our lives, especially ones that frightened us. Cancer is like some of those myths and legends that scare us because you do not know what it is or what it will do to you. I want to help our People develop their own cancer stories and tools to deal with cancer and write a new story about cancer. I hope to help lessen cancer's impact on our communities – NPCC seemed like a good fit with my passion and so here I am.

Strong Heart Stroke Study



The *Strong Heart Stroke Study*, funded by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, is just about to start data collection in the field. This project is a multi-center study of individuals who have previously participated in the Strong Heart Study – a group being examined for cardiovascular health outcomes. The *Strong Heart Stroke Study* will be examining 1000 participants over the coming 3 years. People who are in the study will have a brain MRI, fill out ques-

tionnaires, have a physical exam and blood draw, have their physical performance measured, and have an evaluation of their thinking abilities (cognition).

The field sites for the *Strong Heart Stroke Study* are the same as the Strong Heart Study field sites – located in Phoenix, Arizona at MedStar Research Institute; in Lawton, Oklahoma at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center; and in Timber Lake, South Dakota at Missouri Breaks Industries Research Inc. The *Strong Heart Stroke Study* field teams are very experienced and have been working with these regional American Indian communities for more than 20 years!

As we have traveled and met with the communities that are part of the Strong Heart Study, we have been greeted with great hospitality and enthusiasm for this new *Strong Heart Stroke*

Study. It will document for the first time the prevalence of brain disease in American Indian populations. The main scientific outcomes of the *Strong Heart Stroke Study* will be an estimate of the prevalence of cerebrovascular disease, an assessment of how risk factors are related to cerebrovascular disease, and documentation of how closely cerebrovascular disease is related to cognitive impairment.

Dedra Buchwald (PI), Steve Verney (Project Lead) and Andrea Krinke (Project Coordinator) have been working diligently over the past year to develop the study protocol, prepare questionnaires, and secure all of the tribal approvals, IHS approvals and institutional approvals to launch this new study. We are excited to see it ready to launch!

For more information, please contact Andrea Krinke (ajj@u.washington.edu).

Staying Connected

Every year more than 2,900 injured trauma survivors are treated at 69 hospitals in the United States. Among these patients, American Indian and Alaska Native people have the highest risk of all racial/ethnic groups of being diagnosed with posttraumatic distress (PTSD), 12 months after injury. Of the 6,000 injured trauma survivors admitted every year to the Harborview Level 1 trauma center, about 540 are Native. About 40 percent of these patients live more than 50 miles from the trauma center, including tribal communities in Washington, Montana, and Alaska. Researchers have found that care management interventions reduce PTSD symptoms. They have also found that American Indian trauma survivors have unique cultural terms for posttraumatic distress (e.g., “wounded

spirit”), and that trauma interventions with approaches tailored to Native cultures can help patients suffering from PTSD.

Staying Connected is a pilot study working to reduce the risk of PTSD and other trauma symptoms among American Indian and Alaska Native patients. The purpose of *Staying Connected* is to provide compassionate and culturally sensitive care to Native trauma patients treated at the Harborview Level 1 trauma center and to link them to care in their distant tribal communities. This pilot study is a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the intervention. We are measuring whether intervention patients show greater improvement than controls in PTSD symptoms, depression, functioning, diagnoses, and fewer new injuries

during the 6 months after the original injury. The first step in developing the intervention was to interview Native healers to gather information on culture-specific aspects of recovery from traumatic injury. The healers also provided information on linking care to tribal communities. *Staying Connected* is currently in the recruitment phase.

Staying Connected is funded by the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities. For more information, please contact Ursula Tsosie (utsosie@u.washington.edu) or Sweetwater Nannauck



A Targeted Approach to Increasing American Indian Tissue and Organ Donation



End stage kidney disease is a major health concern among American Indian and Alaska Native people. It is 3 1/2 times more common among American Indians than White Americans. In treating end stage kidney disease, transplantation is associated

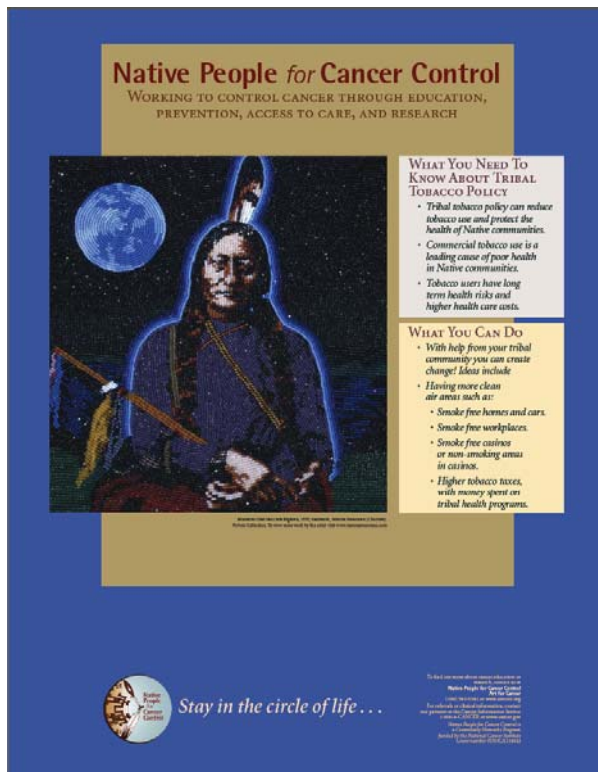
with a better quality of life, lower costs, and a longer life expectancy than long-term dialysis. Even so, Native people stay longer on transplantation wait lists and have lower transplantation rates than Whites. The goals of this project are to increase awareness of the need for organ donation and transplantation among American Indians and to increase the number of Native people who register to donate organs. We are partnering with 5 tribal colleges to create educational materials and organ donation awareness programs on cam-

pus. We have conducted focus groups on all 5 campuses and are developing education and media materials tailored to each college community. One campus organ donation awareness campaign is already underway, and the other 4 will begin within the next year.

This project is funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

For more information, please contact Michelle Montgomery (montgm2@u.washington.edu) or Janice Sabin (sabinja@u.washington.edu).

Two New Posters for Art for Cancer



Above: **What You Need To Know About Tribal Tobacco Policy** is one of the newest Art for Cancer posters. Called *Moonrise over the Little Bighorn*, this beadwork was created by Marcus Amerman (Choctaw). For more information on Art for Cancer, or on ordering posters free of charge, please contact project lead Steve Charles (stevec3@u.washington.edu).

Below: **What Native Men Need To Know About Cancer Prevention** is another new addition to the Art for Cancer collection. This work is called *Medicine Sun Lodge*, by Terrance Guardipee (Blackfeet).



Alaska Workplace Solutions



Cancer is the leading cause of death among Alaska Native people. One potential point of health promotion and disease prevention is through the workplace. Our research team at the University of Washington, Partnerships for Native Health, is partnering with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) to implement the *Alaska Workplace Solutions*

intervention. We are conducting a randomized controlled trial of small to mid-size businesses with a high proportion of Native employees in rural and urban areas in Alaska. We are focusing on workplaces because they provide access for employees to engage in health and wellness activities and typically have well-developed communication systems. The primary goal of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of *Alaska Workplace Solutions*, a package of intervention strategies, policies, programs, and benefits in workplaces that have a substantial number of Alaska Native employees. This intervention package was adapted from materials originally developed by the American Cancer Society and modified for Alaska workplaces. Areas of focus include increasing use of influenza immunization

and cancer screening examinations such as colonoscopy, mammography, and Pap smears, promoting healthy eating habits and physical activity, and encouraging tobacco cessation. We will measure worksite health practices at 3 time points over 24 months to evaluate the effectiveness of this intervention over time.

If your Alaska business or organization is interested in participating in this project, please contact Jennifer Williamson, ANTHC (jwilliamson@anthc.org).

Alaska Workplace Solutions is funded by the National Cancer Institute.

For more information, please contact Kinji Neskahi (kinjin@u.washington.edu) or Janice Sabin (sabinja@u.washington.edu).

Indian Health Service Scholarships

American Indian and Alaska Native students are invited to apply for pre-graduate scholarships from the Indian Health Service. Applicants must be U.S. citizens who can document that they meet Tribal membership requirements and are enrolled in courses leading to a bachelor's degree in specific pre-professional areas as needed by Indian Health programs. **Applications are due March 28, 2010.** Complete details, including an online application, can be found at the Web site: <http://www.scholarship.ihs.gov/>

New Look and Functionality of the "Native Health Database"

Check out the new look and functionality of the "Native Health Database" (NHD): <https://hscssl.unm.edu/nhd/>

The Native Health Database contains bibliographic information and abstracts of health-related articles, reports, surveys, and other resource documents, from 1840 to the present, pertaining to the health and health care of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Canadian First Nations. The database provides information for the benefit, use, and education of organizations and individuals with an interest in health-related issues, programs, and initiatives regarding North American indigenous peoples. ALL FREE!

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