



Project BRIEF

Regional Native American Community Network Program Center:
Native People for Cancer Control

PARTNERSHIPS
for **NATIVE HEALTH**
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

BACKGROUND

American Indians and Alaska Natives are extremely diverse in culture, health care needs, and residential location, ranging from rural tribes and villages to growing urban communities. Despite this diversity, all are typically placed in a single category to calculate national, state, and local statistics. Many published statistics do not even include an enumeration of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Yet accurate demographic data are indispensable, because government policymakers use this information to make decisions about funding for education, health, and other community needs. A simple lumping of hundreds of distinct small groups under the unified heading of "American Indians/Alaska Natives" likely results in a false picture of health trends, given the unique strengths, resources, histories, and concerns of these varied populations.

OBJECTIVES

We seek to improve the accuracy of representations of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Our goal is to make the health disparities that they face more visible to policymakers and health care systems. Our methodology includes key informant interviews and focus groups with members of partner tribes. With these methods we gather community perspectives and identify the distinctive attributes of individual tribes and communities. We use these data to characterize the similarities and differences within and between groups. Our findings will guide researchers in aggregating data on American Indian and Alaska Native people in a manner that is respectful, accurate, and likely to encourage high-quality care.

PRODUCTS/PUBLICATIONS/REPORTS

Online module presenting research guidelines

FUNDING AGENCY: National Cancer Institute (NCI)

PROJECT YEARS: 2011-2012

PARTNERS: Five tribes from Washington, Montana, and Idaho

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Our Mission

Conduct community-centered research, training, education, and outreach to improve health and quality of life for American Indian and Alaska Native populations.