

June 2019 Newsletter

Greetings,

It's been an exciting June at the American Indian Cancer Foundation (AICAF). We launched our very first Survivorship Awareness Month campaign, releasing several new resources and sharing stories to uplift the voices of our brave cancer warriors. Our teams also secured new funding, attended national conferences and trainings, and had the opportunity to strengthen partnerships across the country.

Summer is moving quickly, but staff have been hard at work developing our cancer campaigns for fall. We look forward to adding new initiatives to our agenda in the coming year, including a program that aims to increase HPV vaccination rates, and another focused on decreasing use of electronic cigarettes. There is still much work to be done, but we are eager to get started on bigger projects that will further our mission to improve cancer outcomes in Indian Country.

With gratitude,

The American Indian Cancer Foundation

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Honoring cancer warriors for Survivorship Awareness Month

For the first time this June AICAF celebrated **Survivorship Awareness Month**. We launched a new campaign to help raise awareness and honor all American Indian and Alaska Native cancer survivors, their families, and caregivers. Throughout the month we released a variety of new resources and culturally-specific healing tools, including the **Family History Tree** and **Survivor Nutrition Guide**. All of the latest survivorship resources are available on our **website**.

One of the most impactful components of this campaign derived from the voices of survivors themselves. Sharing these cancer journeys, with all the triumphs and heartache, left a meaningful impression on many followers across AICAF social media platforms. Stories from three brave survivors reached a total of nearly 30,000 people during the month, inspiring several community members to be more mindful of their health and prioritize regular cancer screenings.



*Breast cancer survivor
Jean Howard (Leech Lake
Ojibwe)*



*RMS survivor Andrea Rutstein (Oglala
Lakota)*



*Breast cancer survivor
Melinda Buffalo-
Wanatee (Meskwaki)*

Our team is always appreciative of the warriors who share their wisdom across Indian Country, and welcomes all cancer survivors who want to lend their voice to AICAF's Survivor Story Series. If you or a loved one are interested in participating, please contact communications@aicaf.com.

Raising awareness at NCAI's mid year conference



Left to right: Ernest Stevens, Jr. (Oneida Nation) - NIGA Chairman, Ashley Pohlenz, Colin Welker, Deana Jackson (Navajo) - AICAF Board Secretary

This month our Cancer Equity team attended **National Congress of American Indians'** (NCAI) mid year conference in Reno, NV. The theme of this year's event was 'Tribes Taking Action,' bringing together several Native leaders, organizations, and artists from across the country to help address policy concerns surrounding our communities. Manager Melissa Buffalo (Meskwaki) and senior program specialists Ashley Pohlenz and Colin Welker proudly represented AICAF and hosted a booth. The team shared cancer screening resources with policy leaders, and had the opportunity to meet key stakeholders during event breakout sessions.

Engaging at community mobile mammography event

Partners at the **Native American Community Clinic (NACC)** and the **Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)** recently hosted a mobile mammography unit in Minneapolis, MN. AICAF team members Laura Roberts (Anishinaabe) and Sheryl Lawery attended the event, engaging with several women and teaching them about the importance of regular breast cancer screening. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funded the mammography unit as part of its **National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP)** - our team is excited to take over the program in July. Moving into the third year of this grant, we look forward to onboarding more tribal and urban clinics, developing new culturally-tailored resources, and hosting screening events. AICAF will host the next mobile mammography event at NACC this September.



Indigenous Pink Month is fast approaching! Help raise awareness of breast cancer in Indian Country by hosting a screening event at your clinic, sharing resources and swag, or telling your survivor story. Contact communications@aicaf.org to learn how to get involved in #IndigenousPink2019.

Sharing & learning with Native health students

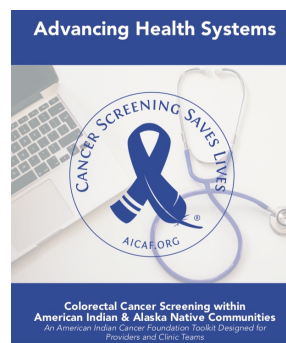
In June our Research Team hosted a meeting with Native Americans into Medicine (NAM) students. The group is part of the **Center of American Indian and Minority Health (CAIMH)**, which provides educational opportunities and health career support to Native students. Together, our staff and NAM students discussed different approaches to decolonizing data and research methods, their career pathways, and personal journeys.



New Clinic Resource!

Our new **CRC Toolkit** provides colorectal cancer screening tools to clinic teams working in American Indian and Alaska Native health systems. This resource was developed in collaboration with our partners at the **National Indian Health Board** (NIHB).

[Download the Toolkit](#)



Using HPV vaccination for cancer prevention in Indian Country



Left to right: Dr. Catharine Young - BCI, Kim Maruccci, Carol Brown - **Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center**, Danielle Carnival - BCI

Strategic Partnerships Manager Kim Maruccci (Chickasaw) gathered with several health professionals at **Biden Cancer Initiative's** (BCI) HPV Vaccine Strategy meeting in Washington, D.C. Currently, very little data exists about the rate of HPV vaccination in Indian Country, but we do know that immunization is the best way to prevent HPV-related cancers. The team is eager to put a three-tiered plan into action to increase HPV vaccinations, and ultimately reduce the rate of its associated diseases like cervical cancer. Native women are nearly twice as likely to develop this disease compared to white women; the vaccine can protect against HPV cases that lead to 9 out of 10 cervical cancers. AICAF will work to address immunization barriers by strengthening our tribal partnerships, using culturally-appropriate materials, and hosting clinic and community health fairs.

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