

May 2019 Newsletter

Greetings,

It's been an exciting month at the American Indian Cancer Foundation (AICAF). We kicked off May with the annual Powwow for Hope event, where hundreds gathered to honor our relatives who are bravely facing cancer. We also released our **Biennial Report**, secured new funding and attended national conferences and trainings. Staff look forward to starting new projects throughout the summer, and enhancing connections with Tribes across the nation to help eliminate cancer burdens in our communities.

In June we will launch our first ever **Survivorship Awareness Month** campaign, sharing new resources, toolkits and stories to raise awareness of American Indian and Alaska Native cancer survivors. This summer we will also begin working with a Native-owned media company to develop a new AICAF website; this design will be more engaging, interactive and user-friendly to better serve community members, partners and public health workers.

We are thankful to the supporters who continue to elevate our programs, and 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

8th Annual Powwow for Hope success

The **8th Annual Powwow for Hope: *Dancing for Life, Love & Hope*** was a great success! Hundreds of people gathered to join us in honoring our loved ones and raise awareness of cancer in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Teams were more dedicated and ambitious than ever; some tables sold handmade jewelry, wraps and sandwiches, while others offered face painting, rock climbing, and the teaching of traditional hand games.



With incredible support from 28 teams, 17 sponsors, 58 silent auction donors and more than 25 volunteers, together we raised over **\$57,000** to heal our Native families across the nation. Proceeds from this year's event will support AICAF in creating positive, lasting impacts on health outcomes in Indian Country. In 2019 and beyond we aim to:

- Increase early detection and cancer screening rates in both Tribal and urban communities
- Provide cancer prevention tools, education and training assistance to more Tribes
- Connect with more Tribes and clinics, and strengthen our relationships with existing partners
- Support cancer survivors and caregivers by providing more culturally-relevant resources, care packages, and platforms to share their stories

Thank you to all who made this event possible.

We can't wait to see you for Powwow for Hope 2020!

Learning, sharing & engaging in the nation's capital



AICAF leaders spent a busy week in Washington, D.C. sharing our work and engaging with other cancer equity leaders. The first stop was the **National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) 2019 Summit**, where we hosted a booth while learning about new health policy trends. From there the team hustled to **Prevent Cancer Foundation's 2019 Dialogue for Action on Cancer Screening & Prevention**. This national conference brings together a diverse group of stakeholders to discuss cancer screening, prevention and risk reduction initiatives in their communities; CEO Kris Rhodes (Bad River & Fond du Lac Chippewa) was invited to lead a discussion on cancer screening in Indian Country during the event. We also had the opportunity to network with several urban clinics, discuss possibilities of new partnerships and showcase AICAF projects. Cancer Equity Manager Melissa Buffalo (Meskwaki) presented our **Powwow Colon Cancer Initiative** video to raise awareness of cancer screening in our communities.

Showcasing AICAF research findings

Our Research Team recently attended the 7th annual **Collaborative Research Center for American Indian Health (CRCAIH) Summit**, where they presented their work 'Nurturing the Future of Native Youth through Research.'



The past few months the team has been working to implement several unique tobacco-centered projects, focusing on rates of commercial tobacco use throughout Minnesota and within Tribal communities. AICAF has been collaborating with Tribes, academic partners and community leaders to develop effective research studies that will be both culturally relevant and appropriate.

AICAF joins Native-serving nonprofits for Nutrition Cohort

The Prevention & Policy Team recently traveled to South Dakota for a meeting with the **Native American Nutrition Cohort**. The **Newman's Own Foundation** announced the formation of this group last May, providing organizations that serve Native communities with \$1.5 million in grants over two years. The Nutrition Cohort is comprised of nine nonprofits - including AICAF - and was established to address food insecurity and nutrition education in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Prevention & Policy Manager Chris Johnson (Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota) and Coordinator Colin Welker joined other grantees at the Pine Ridge Reservation to discuss new healthy foods initiatives and sustainable agriculture in Indian Country.



Annual Survivorship Conference has record breaking attendance

This May, Survivorship VISTA Alyssa Diaz represented AICAF at the **Masonic Cancer Center's (MCC) 14th annual Survivorship Conference** in Bloomington, MN. This conference is held for both cancer survivors and caregivers to learn about the latest in survivorship issues, clinical cancer research and innovations in cancer care. We were honored to be a part of this record-setting event that gathered more than 400 people - this was the second year that conference attendance reached max capacity. During one of the breakout sessions, Diaz spoke about the tremendous cancer burdens faced by American Indian and Alaska Native people, and how AICAF is addressing it. Her presentation was followed by a story from cancer survivor Richard Boswell (Oneida Nation), who shared his experience with prostate cancer.

[Survivorship Resources](#)

Strengthening cancer screening services & partnerships



AICAF is moving into its third year of the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Program Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP). The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) recently renewed our funding for this program, allowing us to help Native women gain access to timely breast and cervical cancer screening, diagnostic, and treatment.

Staff are always learning to help build our services. This May, Strategic Partnerships Manager Kim Marcucci (Chickasaw) attended a **National Association of Chronic Disease Directors** (NACDD) workshop that provided training for leaders who manage cancer

screening and prevention programs. The Tribal/Territorial Cancer Screening Capacity Building Workshop focused on evidence-based screening interventions, communication, and collecting and reporting data; the training aimed to provide leaders with the skills to effectively improve and implement their health systems programs.

As part of NBCCEDP, our team will partner with the Minneapolis **Native American Community Clinic** (NACC) to help increase cancer screening rates at their clinic. Cancer Equity Coordinator Sheryl Lawery and Colin Welker tabled at NACC's open house event in May, raising awareness of cancer screening and providing resources to community members. AICAF and NACC also have plans to cohost their first mobile mammography event in late June.

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