WOMEN'S WELLNESS

Nurturing the Body & Mind of Native American Women | Volume 1 | Issue 1

Inside this Issue

Project Overview.....1

Screening Guidelines..... 2

Traditional Teaching.....3

Cancer Prevention.....3

Infographic.....5

Events.....6

The general purpose of this newsletter is to bring awareness to the health of Native American Women in our communities.

Funded by the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services: Breast & Cervical Cancer Prevention Program.

*Photo by The Shananquet Family & Ndigidreams

Breast Cancer Awareness Month promotions in October

Digital Story Project

The overall goal of the project was to increase screening rates for breast and cervical cancer among American Indian Women in Michigan. In past focus groups, women have indicated "fear" as a primary reason for not obtaining screening. Fear of the screening procedure and fear of finding a cancer diagnosis were specifically expressed. Local tribal Clinic Managers and staff have continued to hear these concerns from their patients. In response to this, the Inter- Tribal Council of Michigan and the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program had chosen to highlight and celebrate local American Indian cancer survivors as a means to encourage local tribal member to obtain screening. By highlighting survivors and their experiences,

Current Screening Guidelines

Breast

- Women ages 45- 54 should receive a mammogram every year.
- Ages 55 and over should receive a mammogram every 2 years.
- These recommendations are for women that are not at higher risk for breast cancer.

Cervical

- All women should begin cervical cancer screening at age 21. Women aged 21-29 should have a pap test every 3 years.
- HPV testing should begin at age 30 combined with a paper test every 5 years.

*Recommendations from the American Cancer Society 2016.

we addressed the concern of fear and foster awareness of survivorship, which should lead to increased participation in screening.

This project utilized technology to create digital stories of cancer survivors and their family members. The digital stories are considered small media as an evidence based intervention to increase cancer screening rates. These short videos are easily accessed and played at local community events, in waiting room areas. The videos are available for use throughout the year and presented at other venues, such as Elder Meal Programs, Mother's Day celebrations and Breast Cancer Awareness Month promotions.

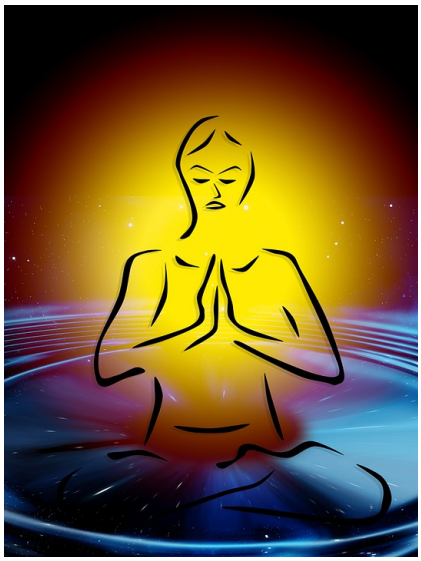
Summary

We had a very positive response from the women that had viewed the digital stories. When asked if viewing the stories made them feel more informed about the importance of cancer screening, 82% reported 'very much'. Also, when asked if viewing the stories made them think about making lifestyle changes (eating better, exercising more, quitting smoking) to reduce their risk of cancer, 76% reported 'very much'.

We are very pleased with the overall project and its impact on members of the local community, especially those within our targeted screening age group. Each of the local tribal coordinators expressed gratitude to the ITC of M, the BCCCP and nDigidreams for making the event possible and an enjoyable experience, resulting in useful small media that can be utilized throughout the year and beyond. To view some of the digital stories, please visit http://www.itcmi.org/departments/health-education-and-chronic-disease/

Anishinaabe Moontime Teachings

The "Moontime" is the woman's cleansing cycle or the natural cycle of menstruation. Anishinaabe people believe that the moon cycle is a gift to a woman from the creator. It is a time for cleansing mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically.



The moontime is considered a time of power only second to the ability of the creator, because it gives a woman the ability to give life. Some teachings say when women are on their moontime, the creator comes closer to them.

The belief is when a woman is on her moontime she should relax and take it easy. In order for the body to cleanse itself, women need to take time for themselves to release all that has accumulated over the month. Women do not prepare food or medicines; they do not take part in ceremony or use sacred items, and refrain from intercourse with their partner. This is a time for women to think about themselves, their families, relatives, or anyone they think may need help. It is a time for reflection.

When women do not follow these teachings and do not allow themselves time for cleaning and reflection, they may become imbalanced and sickness may occur. Anishinaabe women should follow moontime teachings to keep themselves healthy. As women, we care for others and when we become unbalanced, our helping capabilities are affected. Women are caretakers and we need to remember our teachings so we can care for our wellbeing and the wellbeing of our people.

Nutrition & Exercise: What's the Connection?

According to the American Cancer Society, diet and exercise can play a large role in your risk for cancer. Poor diet and low activity levels are two main factors that can increase and individuals risk for cancer. The good news is that individuals can still do something about this.

Besides from quitting smoking, some of the most important things you can do to help reduce the risk of cancer are:

- Get to and stay at a healthy weight throughout life
- Be physically active on a regular basis.
- Make healthier food choices with a focus on plant based foods.

According to the World Cancer Research Fund, 20% of cancers diagnosed in the United States are related to unhealthy body fatness, which means those cancers could have been prevented.

Summary of the ACS Guidelines on Nutrition and Physical Activity

ACS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL CHOICES

Achieve and maintain a healthy weight throughout life.

Be as lean as possible throughout life without being underweight.
Avoid excess weight gain at all ages. For those who are overweight or obese, losing even a small amount of weight has health benefits and is a good place to start.
Get regular physical activity and limit intake of high-calorie foods and drinks as keys to help maintain a healthy weight.

Be physically active.

Adults: Get at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity each week (or a combination of these), preferably spread throughout the week.
Children and teens: Get at least 1 hour of moderate or vigorous intensity activity each day, with vigorous activity on at least 3 days each week.
Limit sedentary behavior such as sitting, lying down, watching TV, and other forms of screen-based entertainment.
Doing some physical activity above usual activities, no matter what one's level of activity, can have many health benefits.

Eat a healthy diet, with an emphasis on plant foods.

Choose foods and drinks in amounts that help you get to and maintain a healthy weight.
Limit how much processed meat and red meat you eat.
Eat at least 2½ cups of vegetables and fruits each day.
Choose whole grains instead of refined grain products.

If you drink alcohol, limit your intake.

Drink no more than 1 drink per day for women or 2 per day for men.

Take Care Of Yourself,

GET SCREENED.

Breast cancer is the **2nd** leading cause of death in AI/AN women.

AI/AN women had fewer early staged cancer diagnoses and more late stage cancer than other races.

Cervical cancer is **69%** higher in AI/AN women than other races.

So what can you do?

Ages 21 +
Pap Test every 3 years

Ages 45+
Mammogram annually

Quit
smoking & drinking alcohol

Eat Healthy, Get Active
150 mins of moderate intesity exercise per week recommended

*Need help quitting smoking?

Call the American Indian Commercial Tobacco Program to talk to a compassionate Native American coach.

1-855-372-0037

INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL OF MICHIGAN, INC.

Community Events

October 17th, 2016 Violence Is Not Tradition, **6pm-8pm,** *Niigaanigizhik Building (11 Ice Circle, Sault Set Marie, MI)*.

Registration for the awareness walk begins at 5pm. There will be a free pizza dinner and the first 300 participants will receive a free sweatshirt. For further information, contact the Advocacy Resource Center at (906) 632-1808

October 19th, 2016 Women's Medicine Walk , **5pm-7pm,** *Chi Mukwa Big Bear (Sault Ste. Marie, MI)*.

Hosted by Healthy Start Community Action Network. Event if free but please register with Sandy Thompson by October 12th to reserve your spot or for more information. sthompson@itcmi.org or (906)632-6896

October 21st, 2016 Indigenous Pink Day

Indigenous Pink Day is a national breast cancer awareness campaign for American Indians/Alaska Natives. The AMERICAN INDIAN CANCER FOUNDATION invites men and women of all ages to wear pink and share photos on social media using the hashtag **#IndigenousPink** to spread breast cancer awareness. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death and the most common cancer found in American Indian/Alaska Native women. The goal of Indigenous Pink Day is to educate all indigenous people on the importance of early detection and remind men and women to keep up to date on their screenings. For more information on how to get involved, visit www.AmericanIndianCancer.org/pink