

Bay Mills Indian Community
Brimley, Michigan 49715
**Grand Traverse Band
of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians**
Suttons Bay, Michigan 49682
Hannahville Indian Community
Wilson, Michigan 49896
**Saginaw Chippewa
Indian Tribe**
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858
**Little Traverse Bay
Bands of Odawa Indians**
Harbor Springs, Michigan 49740
**Nottawaseppi Huron
Band of The Potawatomi**
Fulton, Michigan 49502



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Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
Baraga, Michigan 49908
**Lac Vieux Desert Band
of Lake Superior Chippewa**
Watersmeet, Michigan 49969
**Sault Ste. Marie
Tribe of Chippewa Indians**
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan 49783
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians
Dowagiac, Michigan 49047
**Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish
(Gun Lake Tribe)**
Dorr, Michigan 49323
**Little River Band
of Ottawa Indians**
Manistee, Michigan 49660

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Early Detection is the Key to Fight Colorectal Cancer for Native Americans **Christopher Polasky shares his fight to overcome colorectal cancer**

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. – Christopher Polasky, is the Waganakising Odawa Career and Technical Education Program (WOCTEP) Project Director at Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians and a member of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Chris shared the story of his battle to overcome colorectal cancer to encourage Native Americans in Michigan to complete their colorectal cancer screening. Chris reinforces that early detection offers a greater chance to overcome colorectal cancer.

As he tells his story, Polasky states “Alcohol was the worst thing I ever did to myself. And the second worst would be the (commercial) tobacco. Those were what helped me give me the cancer.” He continues noting that after he gave up alcohol and commercial tobacco “the quality of my life has gone up. I weigh less than I used to. I have more energy than I used to. I’m happier than I used to be.”

Polasky continued “I’m not here just to live for me. I’m here to live for the people around me, too. Because we all need each other to help pick each other up and carry on. Boy, I couldn’t be here today if I didn’t have these beautiful folks around me to help me do that. Get screened for the beautiful folk around you in your life. Get screened for them.”

Screening rates are increasing in our tribal populations. However, colon cancer is still one of the most common cancers in Michigan Native American populations. Native Americans in Michigan suffer higher rates of colon cancer and cancer deaths compared to the general population.

Colon cancer is preventable with early screening.

Screening can detect precancerous polyps, and early stage cancers when treatment is more effective and less invasive. There are a number of ways to screen for colon cancer; from take home tests to colonoscopies. All of which are covered at no cost by tribal insurance programs, Medicaid, Medicare, and the Michigan Colorectal Cancer Early Detection Program.

Christopher Polasky’s story will be shared through video and audio, at conferences, digital platforms including social media, internet pre-roll, and as PSA time on local television networks.

For more information on colon cancer screening, talk to your health care provider, visit itcmi.org or michigancancer.org/colorectal.

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The Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, Inc. is a 501(C)3 non-profit corporation duly organized under a state charter filed April 16, 1968. The agency represents all twelve federally recognized tribes in Michigan. The agency is divided into several different divisions, including: headstart; early headstart; health services; behavioral health; environmental services; child, family, and education services; and administration. The agency employs approximately 160 employees. 35 of these employees are based in the agency’s central office in Sault Ste. Marie, while member tribes have offices and staff on site. Visit <http://www.itcmi.org/> to learn more about the agency.

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Christopher Polasky, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, WOCTEP Project Director at Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians urges the importance to schedule your colon cancer screening by sharing the story of his battle with colorectal cancer.



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