Honoring Traditions of Health and Wellness for Cancer Prevention

North Dakota Comprehensive Cancer Control Program Annual Meeting
Bismarck, ND
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American Indian Cancer data

• Indian Health Service – top 2 leading causes of AI deaths (2007-2009) for all ages were heart disease and cancer
  – The leading site for cancer deaths among AI in 2007-2009 was lung cancer.
    » Over 2.9 times as many AI people died of this type of cancer
  – Followed by colorectal cancer, liver then breast
Cancer Death Rates
(Rate per 100,000 population)


Smoking Disparities by State

American Indian Rate
State Rate
Program Overview

Goal: To increased screening rates among American Indians and decrease late-stage cancer diagnoses

- Project used American Cancer Society’s Circle of Life Curriculum spread over 10 sessions incorporating the education into traditional sewing circles
- Provide education of screenable cancers, promotes screening and includes informed/shared decision making in worksites or at the community level

PSE Approach

- 2 of the F-M American Indian programs to develop policies to replace unhealthy food with healthier Indigenous foods
  - Policy effective date 2017
  - FMNAC has implemented policy unofficially
Why a Sewing Circle?

• Sewing circles are traditional way of sharing information
  – shawl is a symbol of a mother’s warm arms
  – Ribbon shirts for men wore at special social gatherings & ceremonies

• Activities need to have an appropriate cultural frame work for effective education
Lessons Learned

• AI are affected by many types of cancers – not just the top 4 leading cancer sites
• Heavy topic
• Lack of awareness that some cancers are preventable
• Stigma of cancer – no one wants to talk about it
Lessons Learned

- AI are affected by many types of cancers – not just the top 4 leading cancer sites
- Lack of awareness that some cancers are preventable
- Stigma of cancer – no one wants to talk to about it
- Evaluation – pre & post tests isn’t the best measure of perceptions of health knowledge gained

Digital Stories

- Great Plains Tribal Chairmen’s Health Board - Northern Plains Cancer Coalition sub-award to develop digital stories
- Goal of digital stories:
  - Increase awareness of cancer
  - Increasing screening
Thank You to Our Partners

- NDCC
- GPTCHB – NPCC
- Family Health Care Center
- Arming Sisters and Awaking Warriors
- Digital Story Team - Jolene Yazzie, Hannabah Blue & Falcon Got
- Women age 40 and older should have yearly mammograms and clinical breast exams.
- Most breast lumps are benign, but if you find lumps or other changes, talk to a health care provider right away.
"I think about it, when I have my regular check up each year. I am really hesitant to do it, but I know I have to do it, because I have grandkids now, and I want to be here longer, take care of myself more than I used to. To me family is the most important thing in my life. I want them to know what is going on with me, if it happens again."
“It’s been great to be a part of a group of women that have had cancer or were there because a family member had or has cancer and knowing we were not alone was comforting.”

PSE: Return to Indigenous Foods
Digital Story
April - Survivor

Thank you!

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