AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE YOUTH AND COMMERCIAL TOBACCO USE

JUNE 14, 2012
HHS Region X Youth and Tobacco Town Hall Meeting

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“Improving Indian Health through Tribal-State Collaboration”
American Indian Health Commission (AIHC) for Washington State

- Tribally-driven Indian Health Organization
- Provides a forum for tribal-state health issues
- Collaborates to identify, prioritize, voice, and act on Indian health issues
- Supports activities to prevent and reduce adverse health conditions and health disparities in Indian Country
- Collaborates with governmental and non-profit organizations
Current Smokeless Tobacco Use
High School Youth

% Current Smokeless Tobacco Use

- **AIAN youth**
- **General population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>AIAN Youth</th>
<th>General Population</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Smoking During Pregnancy

% Cigarette Smoking During Last 3 Months of Pregnancy

- Washington
- Oregon
- Alaska
- Idaho

- AIAN women
- General population
Top 10 Leading Causes of Death - Washington State
* indicates caused or complicated by commercial tobacco use

- Major cardiovascular diseases*
- Cancer (Malignant neoplasms)*
- Accidents
- Diabetes mellitus*
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases*
- Alzheimer's disease
- Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
- Infectious and Parasitic Disease
- Influenza and pneumonia*
- Intentional self-harm (suicide)

AIAN Age-Adjusted Rate (per 100,000)
WA Total Age-Adjusted Rate (per 100,000)
Challenges: Why are smoking rates so high in the American Indian/Alaska Native communities?

- The Tobacco Industry markets to youth using cultural images and symbols so they become long-term smokers.
- Having family and friends who smoke is more likely to influence smoking for the youth.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke puts the youth at risk to smoke.
- Youth start smoking as young as age 10 increasing the likelihood of smoking in adulthood.
- Limited prevention programs that are culturally specific to reduce initiation of smoking.
- Limited cessation programs to reduce smoking rates.
- Perceived low harm value/lack of awareness about the harmful effects associated with tobacco use.

Source: Native Network Keep It Sacred
### Challenges: Why are smoking rates so high in the American Indian/Alaska Native communities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Tobacco</th>
<th>Commercial Tobacco</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Has been used by AI/AN for thousands of years</td>
<td>- Manufactured and sold for a profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Plays significant role in creation stories</td>
<td>- Casual and recreational use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Native tobacco is medicine</td>
<td>- Profitable enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Used for prayer and healing</td>
<td>- Can cause addiction, disease and death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Used as an offering or giving thanks</td>
<td>- Tobacco-sponsored events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Presented as a sign of respect</td>
<td>- Uses Native images for promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It is a cultural practice/Native way of life</td>
<td>- Used for ceremonial or cultural events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use and practices vary</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## The Journey Forward: Building on Tobacco Prevention Success in Tribal and Urban Indian Communities

### Tribal Successes
- **Indian Heath Service** was the first smoke-free public health entity, 1994
- **Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB)** initiated tobacco policy efforts in 1988
- NPAIHB developed nationally recognized **Tribal Tobacco Policy Toolkit**
- 32 tribes with the NPAIHB established tobacco policy in tribal facilities
- **Funding for Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Programs at the tribal level** made a difference
- **Attitudes and behaviors have started to change about commercial tobacco use**

### Good News

In Washington State:
- Smoking rates among AI/AN adults have dropped from 41 percent in 2003 to 30 percent in 2010
- Exposure to secondhand smoke has declined significantly
- Nearly 700 fewer AI/AN youths are using tobacco today
- 90% of AI/AN adults do not allow smoking in their home.
- 95% of AI/AN parents have told their children they do not want them to use commercial tobacco
- Many Tribal and Urban Indian communities are making community spaces smoke-free
The Journey Forward: Building on Tobacco Prevention Success in Tribal and Urban Indian Communities

Moving in the Right Direction; Need to Strengthen Our Efforts

AIHC Activities

- Passed Resolution in Support of Quit Line
- Testified before State Legislature
- Held statewide AI/AN Chronic Disease Prevention Training
- Developed AI/ANs Health Profile and Commercial Tobacco Use Data
- Administering Tribal/Urban Indian Leaders’ Tobacco Assessment
- Developed partnerships with tribes, state, federal and national organizations
- Brochure: The Journey Forward-Building on Tobacco Prevention Successes in Tribal Communities
- Healthy Tribal/Urban Indian Communities
- Building support for Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Education Campaign funding
EVERYONE IS INVITED!

For information on this year’s Tribal Journey, please go to PaddletoSquaxin2012.org

July 29th, Port of Olympia, North Point, between KGY & adjacent to the Swantown Marina;

July 30th, Kamilche (between Olympia & Shelton), at the Squaxin Island Community -- Potlatch Protocol Celebration
Acknowledgments:
Data analysis and interpretation provided by Julia A Dilley, PhD, MES, Senior Research Scientist, Program Design & Evaluation Services, Multnomah County Health Department/Oregon Health Authority.
Contributions by Kerri Lopez, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board

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