Improving Health of Native American Elders through Increasing Traditional Food Consumption

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## Health Disparities

- **Overweight/Obesity**
- **Diabetes Mellitus Type II**
- **Cancer**
- **Cardiovascular Disease and Events: MI (Heart Attacks), Strokes, PAD, PVD**
- **Standing Rock: High smoking rates**

### Obesity and Overweight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Obese</th>
<th>Obese &amp; Overweight Combined</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ND White M/F 18 yrs and older</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>BRFSS 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sioux County, ND No age group</td>
<td>33.7 - 43.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>ND Compass *SRCEDS Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corson County, SD Includes American Indian Population</td>
<td>42.0 - 45.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>CDC *SRCEDS Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND/SD American Indian M Ages 40-74</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>41 (overweight only)</td>
<td>Strong Heart 1984-1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND/SD American Indian F Ages 40-74</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35 (overweight only)</td>
<td>Strong Heart 1984-1999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors in Middle Age INCREASED DEMENTIA RISK Later In Life.

DEMENTIA WAS:
- 41% higher in smokers
- 39% higher in people with high blood pressure
- 77% higher in people with diabetes

Source: American Stroke Association’s International Stroke Conference 2017, Abstract 98, Rebecca F. Gottesman
Limited services and access to services

Prevention is key
Improve access to healthy foods
Diabetes Mellitus Type II can be prevented and controlled through diet and exercise

- **Diet Barriers**
  - Reservations as food deserts
  - Limited access to healthy foods
  - Transportation
  - Cooking declines
  - High salt, high fat, high sugar diet

- **Exercise Barriers**
  - Limited green spaces
  - Transportation
  - Housing in shortage
  - Responsibilities: i.e. caring for grandchildren
Historical events shaped current food policies, systems, and environment on the reservation:

- Forced relocation through extermination of bison
- Boarding schools
- Building of dams on Missouri River
Title VI
Older Indians Act
https://olderindians.acl.gov/

Older Americans Act
Title III: Federal, State
Title VI: Tribal
Title VI – Nutrition for the Elderly/Caregiver Support Program

- Supportive Services
  - Home and Community Based Services
- Nutrition Services
  - Congregate Meals
  - Home-delivered meals
  - Promotion of Socialization
- Caregiver Support Program
  - Caregivers taking care of an elder
  - Elders providing care for disabled family member
  - Elders providing care for grandchildren
Targeted Population

Standing Rock Indian Reservation

Percentage of Total Population, 8,217

- 18 yrs & younger
- 34 yrs & younger
- 65 yrs & older
- American Indian

Age Groups

Source: 2010 U.S. Census
Standing Rock Indian Reservation

Nutrition Services:
80% is home-delivered meals
Delivery is volunteer
500 meals per day
Title VI Programs promote the use of Traditional Native Foods in the menu

Use funds for subsistence hunting:
- Bullets
- Mileage
- Processing of meat

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Lean meats: buffalo, deer,
Garden fresh vegetables: corn, squash, beans, tomatoes
Fruits: chokecherries, wild plums
Harvested foods: tinpsila, mushrooms, cheyaka (mint tea)
Studies have shown that CVD can be reversed using diet.

This is specifically for vegan diets.

No face and no mother.

What do you call an Indian Vegetarian?
Wóyute kiŋ phežúta-Food as Medicine

Squash & Beans
- Foods high in magnesium and potassium
- Regulate blood pressure and blood glucose levels
- Help with Na+/K+ pumps and Ca++ channels at the cellular level

Chokecherries
- Hydrocyanic acid
- Blood cleanser: often used in ceremony
- "Anti-oxidant properties (polyphenols), prevent oxidation and aggregation of LDL and the subsequent development of atherosclerotic lesions. Prevents the development of cardiovascular dz. “
Traditional Foods Initiative

- Protection of remaining traditional food sites.
- Increase conservation efforts
- Reestablish traditional food pathways
- Donation of buffalo from the tribal bison herd
- Gardens Assistance Program
  - Part-time Coordinator
  - Planting of traditional fruit trees in shelter belts
  - NRCS, Land Management
Key Components of this Initiative

– Using the program to provide the necessary nutrition
– Promote intergenerational activities for the transfer of knowledge from the elders to the younger generation
– Promote socialization which decreases isolation, depression, and worsening of current health conditions
– The use of traditional foods is a holistic approach to improve the health of Native American elders on many levels
“We can only begin to address the health disparities when we begin to address health equity”
Philamayaye ksto.
Thank you