

UI Quarterly

FALL ISSUE '09

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The Urban Indian Quarterly

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Greetings From The Executive Director

Ralph Forquera, Executive Director

October is breast cancer awareness month. Pink is everywhere. Even the National Football League has taken up the mantle, displaying pink ribbons and banners in stadiums across the country and even on the apparel of the players themselves. Nothing like seeing a 300 pound defensive tackle wearing pink shoes.

Today, American Indian women face higher risk of late stage breast cancer diagnosis and lower five-year breast cancer survival rates than do white women. Yearly medical exams, practicing breast self-examination, and having regular mammograms as prescribed are critical actions to help with finding problems early and getting proper and timely treatment. However, American Indian women face challenges in access to timely and appropriate health care. In some instances, Indian women may fail to seek or are unable to receive timely screening and treatment for breast cancer due to a number of different economic, social, cultural and environmental barriers – challenges which contribute to the statistics and disparities we see today.

The WEAVING Project, managed by Jessie Folkman at the UIHI, is working with UIHO and state breast and cervical cancer programs (BCCP) to help increase breast and cervical screening rates of urban American Indian and Alaska Native women. This work uses the experience and expertise of our sister agencies to inform and share strategies proven successful with Indian communities, as well as to build collaborations with state officials in an attempt to increase screening opportunities and improve early treatment options for Native women in cities. The products from this work, including outreach and promotional materials, documentation of success stories, and strengthening of partnerships, are built for sustainability as well as applicability to other health concerns and disparities faced by urban Indian communities.

The WEAVING Project is an example of how using partnerships and collaborations can strengthen our efforts to retard and reverse the untenable health trends that have afflicted our communities for far too long. The UIHI appreciates the time and talents of our colleagues in helping to build capacity and materials that we hope will lead to effective solutions. If you have questions about the WEAVING Project or want to know more about breast cancer, contact the Urban Indian Health Institute and we will do our best to help. ●

“American Indian women face higher risk of late stage breast cancer diagnosis and lower five-year breast cancer survival rates...”

Want to know what's happening with the WEAVING Project?

Be sure to visit the new website <http://www.theWEAVINGproject.org> and join the quarterly conference calls!
More information on page 2

Did you know that...

The UIHI has a Communication Broadcast to share data, project, and report information with our partners. Subscribers will receive monthly data snapshots and report publication announcements.

Subscribe today! Go to: <http://www.uihi.net/Public/NewsletterSubscriptions.aspx>



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WEAVING Opportunities

Jessie Folkman, Project Coordinator



Weaving Resources for Urban Indian Women's Wellness (The WEAVING Project) is a UIHI project that provides technical assistance to UIHO and state breast and cervical cancer early detection programs (BCCEDP) to support breast and cervical cancer screening among urban Indian women.

The 2010 year marks the third year of the WEAVING Project. We are honored to be working with so many of you, and look forward to a busy year ahead! We encourage you to take advantage of the resources and technical assistance we have to offer.

Below are some ways to connect with us:

Visit our website at www.theweavingproject.com

Here, you will find detailed information about the WEAVING Project, and can download a range of different resources. New outreach recipes have recently been added, including "Screening Awareness Bingo" and "Cancer Awareness Ribbon Cookies". These colorful, easy to use recipes provide step-by-step instructions for outreach and referral ideas. These can be downloaded from our website, or mailed to you upon request.

Join our quarterly conference call/webinars

Attended by UIHO and state BCCP representatives, these calls are a great opportunity for information sharing and networking. Our next call is scheduled for Thursday, January 7th, 2010 at 10:00 Pacific/1:00 Eastern Time. If you do not already receive save the date information, please email Jessie Folkman at jessief@uihi.org to be added to our mailing list. We hope you will join us! ●

Call or email us anytime! We always look forward to hearing from you! Please contact

Jessie Folkman, Project Coordinator at (206) 812-3033, jessief@uihi.org or Annie Phare, Project Coordinator at (206) 812-3032, anniep@uihi.org



Prostate Cancer Screening and Follow-up

Meghan Jernigan, Project Coordinator

Health science research has shown substantial disparities in cancer care for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations when compared to other ethnic groups. In particular, prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death in American Indian men.^{1,2} Additionally, American Indian men are diagnosed at later stages and have poorer survival rates when compared to non-Hispanic white men.^{3,4} Despite these disparities in diagnosis and outcome, little is known about prostate health care, including follow-up care, for AI/AN men.

In order to identify patterns of follow-up care and needs specific to our urban community, the SIHB's UIHI is embarking on a new project in collaboration with 7 urban Indian health organizations across the country. This project aims to improve services and programs specific to prostate cancer screening and care for urban AI/AN men. One type of screening that is done is a blood test called a Prostate-Specific Antigen test, or a PSA test. We will be surveying AI/AN men who have been screened for prostate cancer or received a diagnosis of prostate cancer. We would like to know more about patterns of follow-up care including potential barriers to care that urban AI/AN men who have received a PSA test may experience. As with many of our projects, we are busy developing helpful resources for the community, and connecting the urban Indian health organizations with existing tools from the CDC. ●

If you would like to learn more about this project, or to request a Prostate Cancer Fact Sheet for your urban AI/AN community, please contact: Meghan Jernigan, MPH, Project Coordinator at (206) 812-3038 or meghanj@uihi.org



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Bemidji Area Urban American Indian/Alaska Native Needs Assessment

Alice Park, Project Coordinator

In 2008, the UIHI responded to a request from the urban Indian community and the Bemidji Area Office Indian Health Service (IHS) to conduct data analysis and reporting for a health needs assessment. The needs assessment was conducted in six urban centers within the Bemidji area: the five cities with an urban Indian health organization (Chicago IL, Detroit MI, Green Bay WI, Milwaukee WI and Minneapolis MN), as well as Grand Rapids MI.

"Addressing the role of socioeconomic factors should be central to any effort to address health disparities..."

Bemidji Area - Continued

An Advisory Committee was convened with representatives from the six urban areas included in the assessment to guide the needs assessment project. The project was funded by the Indian Health Service Bemidji Area Office, Office of Minority Health, Office of Public Health and Science, and the Indian Health Service Urban Indian Health Program. Funding for survey development, pretesting and database development was provided by the Indian Health Service Division of Epidemiology and Disease Prevention, Tribal Epidemiology Center grant.

Survey questions focused on six major areas: health education and health promotion, healthcare and health program funding, systems and regulations, healthcare access-general, healthcare quality and social issues that impact health. Cognitive interviewing was done to pretest and produce a validated urban American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) needs assessment instrument. Participants were self-identified AI/AN age 18 and older living in service areas for the UIHOs, and were recruited from sites using client lists. Additional AI/AN living in the community were recruited by advertising the needs assessment in newspapers, at other AI/AN organizations dedicated to promoting Indian heritage and culture, and organizations providing health and social services to AI/AN. Recruitment also took place at local AI/AN events, such as powwows and community celebrations.

A total of 2,404 interviews were completed, representing 2.9% of the population living in these urban areas. Approximately 400 surveys were completed per site. The assessment documented substantial health needs, as well as many social and economic factors that put AI/AN living in these urban areas in Bemidji at risk for not receiving needed services. Addressing the role of socioeconomic and social factors should be central to any effort to address health disparities identified from the assessment. The information from the assessment may be used by UIHO for program planning, to allocate resources, and guide evaluation of services. Information from the survey, including gaps in services, along with data on the health status of urban AI/AN provide further justification of the need and expansion of urban Indian health program funding. ●

Last Chance to Schedule FREE onsite Viral Hepatitis Training for 2009

Annie Phare, Project Coordinator

American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) experience high rates of Hepatitis C compared to other racial/ethnic populations. AI/AN also experience high mortality rates due to chronic liver disease and are two times more likely to be diagnosed with chronic liver disease than non-Hispanic Whites.

The UIHI provides free viral hepatitis prevention training to behavioral health and medical staff at Title V urban Indian health organizations (UIHO). Now is the last chance to schedule a free training for your UIHO for 2009.

To schedule a free training at your site or to discuss if this training is right for you and your staff, please contact Annie Phare at anniep@uihi.org or (206) 812-3030. Training is adapted to suit the needs of each UIHO and intended to help staff integrate prevention and education services into current systems.

The training includes:

- Overview of viral hepatitis
- Information about disease transmission
- Discussion of at risk groups
- Strategies for prevention
- Recommendations for screening and vaccination
- Discussion of harm reduction and risk assessment



To schedule a free training at your site, please contact Annie Phare at anniep@uihi.org or (206) 812-3030. ●

Project Update: Demystifying Data Project from the Office of Minority Health

Rachel Brucker, Project Coordinator

"The UIHI is highlighting UIHO activities from across the country ..."

Look ahead for some upcoming events related to the UIHI's Demystifying Data Project:

- The UIHI is developing a health data literacy curriculum that will be targeted to staff working in urban Indian health organizations. Aimed at helping participants' better use and understand health data, these trainings will be adapted to meet your needs.

- Have a successful project or event that you would like to share with other UIHO? The UIHI is highlighting UIHO activities from across the country in our newsletter and communication broadcast to recognize the great work you do and to offer ideas to other agencies. Please contact us to feature your activities.

- A staff person from the UIHI may contact you for your opinions about recent communications from our office. We are interested in your feedback about how we can best reach you with information, assistance, and support.

- The UIHI annually accesses data from national sources such as Vital Statistics and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). If you have questions or requests for data in your area, please contact us at info@uihi.org or 206-812-3030. ●

Health Information Technology : RWJ Strategic Planning Session

Ye Song, Project Coordinator

Accurate and timely data are essential for understanding and improving health status for the nearly 70% of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) now residing in urban areas. Through a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the 2007 Urban Indian Health Commission report, *Invisible Tribes: Urban Indians and Their Health in a Changing World*, examined available data on urban Indian health. The report noted the lack of data as a key challenge in improving urban Indian health and recommended expanding health information technology (HIT) capacity at urban Indian health organizations (UIHO).

This past August, the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) hosted a strategic planning session in Seattle, WA to facilitate developing a strategic plan that addresses HIT needs at the 34 UIHO. The UIHI invited the Executive Directors from each UIHO, as well as representatives from other organizations working for urban AI/AN health, to provide their input.



Meeting participants toured the Seattle Indian Health Board clinic and viewed a demonstration of the Electronic Health Record system currently in use. The strategic planning session included expert panelists who discussed the benefits and challenges of implementing EHR systems at UIHO. Keynote speakers from the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Office of the National Coordinator on Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) also provided insight about the future of health information technology in relation to UIHO and the nation as a whole.

Participants provided many recommendations about the collaboration, resources, data, technology, and advocacy needed to achieve an accurate picture of urban Indian health and provide the best health care to urban AI/AN. Findings from this meeting will inform the development of a strategic plan around HIT for UIHO. In the weeks ahead, findings from the strategic planning session will be made available to UIHO Executive Directors and other meeting attendees.

The UIHI would like to thank the participants and the urban Indian health organizations for their contributions; IHS and ONCHIT speakers for their input; Seattle Indian Health Board staff for their assistance; and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for its continued support. The UIHI is honored to be a part of this effort to improve the health of urban American Indians and Alaska Natives.

For more information, please contact the UIHI at 206.812.3030 or info@uihi.org ●

Summer Interns at UIHI

Julie Loughran

One of the UIHI's student interns this year was Julie Loughran, a MPH graduate from the University of Washington's Community Oriented Public Health Practice (COPHP) program. Julie's past work has focused on sexual and reproductive health education and harm reduction. In place of a thesis, COPHP students complete a Capstone project that provides a community organization a product with practical value that will contribute to the solving of a health problem. In October of 2008, Julie began working with the UIHI on her Capstone project and was paired with the Native American Women's Dialogue on Infant Mortality (NAWDIM), one of the UIHI's community partners, to support its unique infant mortality intervention, the cradleboard class.

Julie drew upon the work of a regional Perinatal Periods of Risk workgroup that includes the UIHI, local and state health departments, and AI/AN organizations in WA, OR and ID to create a fact sheet illustrating the disparity in fetal and infant mortality rates experienced by AI/AN in Washington State. The factsheet is being used for policy advocacy and awareness-raising in the community. Julie talked with NAWDIM members and cradleboard class participants to document the work NAWDIM has accomplished and to improve the class and evaluate its outcomes. Finally, drawing from information gathered through these activities, Julie prepared grant materials that can be submitted by NAWDIM to a variety of potential funders to support future cradleboard classes.

Julie graduated this past June and she hopes to continue to work with the AI/AN population around Seattle in implementing community driven solutions to health disparities. The UIHI would like to thank Julie for her excellent work and dedication to this project! ●

Rad Cunningham

This past summer, the UIHI was pleased to have student intern, Rad Cunningham, join our team. Rad is an MPH/MPA candidate at the University of Washington and has diverse experience in managing public health programs abroad. He has worked with the Carter Center in Southern Sudan and the Peace Corps in Paraguay, focusing on issues in environmental health.

During his time at the UIHI, Rad worked on the Health Information Technology Strategic Planning Session, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (see separate article for more information on this project). Rad assisted with meeting preparations, conducting a comprehensive literature review, and summarizing current initiatives and federal policies on HIT and carrying out meeting logistics. From meeting planning to operational logistics, Rad's extensive input in public health and policy and preparation of documents was invaluable to the project's success.

Rad currently continues his training as a MPH/MPA student, working toward his degree in 2010. The UIHI would like to thank Rad for his excellent work and dedication to the strategic planning session project, and wishes him great success in all his future plans! ●