

GREAT LAKES INTER-TRIBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTER

A REGIONAL GOOD HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN INDIAN COUNTRY UPDATE

BEMIDJI AREA REGIONAL UPDATE

GHWIC Background

Between 2014-2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will invest over \$78 million in chronic disease prevention efforts through the Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country (GHWIC) initiative. With the support of GHWIC funding, eleven Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TECs):

- Coordinate evaluation activities and data collection to highlight the regional work of GHWIC-funded Tribes and Tribal organizations.
- Provide technical assistance to GHWIC-funded Tribes and Tribal organizations.
- Enhance cross-sector partnerships and strengthen American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) networks across the service region.

Regional Efforts to Prevent and Manage Chronic Disease

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center (GLITEC) coordinates GHWIC evaluation known as the Bemidji Area Leaders Acting for Change (BALAC) in the Indian Health Service (IHS) Bemidji Area. In the past year, eleven Tribes and urban Indian organizations have supported chronic disease prevention and management by:

1. Combating Type II Diabetes

Bay Mills Indian Community, created a “Prescription for Health: Diabetes Coupons at the Brimley Bay Mills Farmer’s Market” program. Bay Mills Members participating in diabetes self-management education were given \$30 in coupons to spend at the market on local and traditional foods, maple syrup, honey, and eggs. In 2016, 81 booklets were distributed to participants completing the program. As a result participants increased consumption of fruits and vegetable. Due to this success, other Tribal programs have also adopted this same format.

2. Promoting Healthy Tobacco Choices

Two Bemidji Area Tribes have successfully implemented smokefree housing policies, one of which was a multi-unit housing structure. Another Tribe passed a policy for 25% of all Tribal housing units to go smokefree. All Tribal buildings, except the casino, have commercial tobacco free policies in Lac Vieux Desert and the health clinic is a smoke-free campus.

3. Accessing Healthy Foods

Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Health partnered with Wintergreen Farms to start a Farm-to-Community program. Ten full shares of produce were distributed to local tribal departments and the BALAC Coordinator gave Healthy Nutrition presentations to provide education on healthy nutrition and assist teachers and parents in promoting healthy food choices.



Activity Spotlight: The Value of GHWIC In Communities

The activities above all highlight the many successes of BALAC work to improve health and well-being of their communities. The GHWIC approach has allowed for establishment and meaningful utilization of community coalitions. The coordinator from American Indian Health and Family Services of Southeastern Michigan poignantly noted:

“Utilizing our community coalition and participatory decision-making processes has allowed our team to tailor our interventions to the unique needs of our own community. Engaging community in the planning and implementation process has begun moving people from passive service recipients to active agents in their own wellbeing. In other words, it’s allowing our community to practice more sovereignty--by allowing them the authority to create the policies, systems, and environmental changes to establish a healthy norm in our communities. Instead of an outside entity prescribing the intervention, our community is leading initiatives to preserve and revitalize some of our ancestral wellness practices.”

- Shiloh Maples, BALAC Coordinator

September 2017

By the Numbers

8

community gardens have been created or expanded

All four BALAC sub-awardees and two local Tribes participated in community garden efforts to improve access to healthy foods in their communities. Examples of gardening activities include:

- The collection and creation of traditional seed libraries to promote and sustain traditional foods.
- Planting straw bale gardens.
- Maintaining a 2-acre orchard in a public park.
- Community supported agriculture distributed to elders and a children's nursery to ensure access to healthy foods even for the most vulnerable.
- Revival of an apple orchard to provide fresh healthy fruit to the community.
- Processing and distribution of produce to improve access to fresh foods.
- Honey extraction.
- Planting of traditional tobacco.

1,402

adults have increased physical activity

The Bemidji Area Tribal and urban Indian communities have worked to increase physical activity to improve the overall health and well-being of their communities. They have encouraged exercise through the following:

- Enhancing walking trails to provide safe and accessible exercise options for community members.
- Promoting traditional forms of exercise to ensure activities are culturally relevant and significant.
- Providing weight management programs.
- Enacting a policy that allows for paid physical activity time during the workday to promote and encourage healthy behaviors in the workplace.

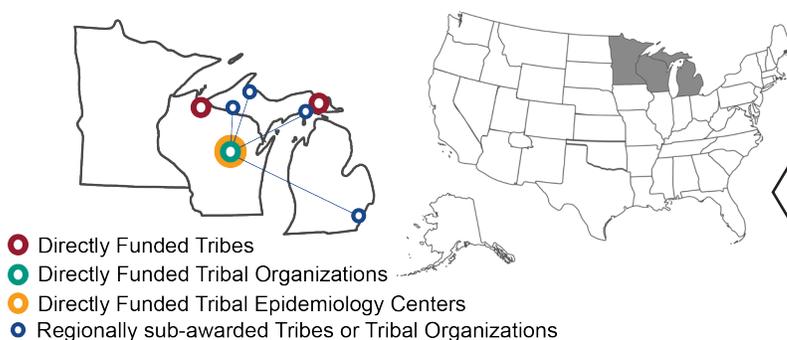
143

settings have adopted policies to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke

Three Tribes have successfully passed smokefree policies which ultimately reach 143 unique settings within these communities. These settings include: Tribal housing, Tribal clinics, as well as other Tribally-owned and operated buildings which reach a wide range of community members who utilize these sites.

Furthermore, three Tribes have conducted smokefree housing surveys to better understand community needs and perceptions. Tribes are currently using the results to help persuade their respective Tribal Councils to pass smokefree policies.

Map of GHWIC-funded Tribes and Tribal organizations in the IHS Bemidji Area



Smoke-Free Housing

Smoke-free housing has many benefits. Because we spend so much time in our homes...