

ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRIBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTER

A REGIONAL GOOD HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN INDIAN COUNTRY UPDATE

BILLINGS 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

Rocky Mountain Tribal Epidemiology Center (RMTEC) coordinates GHWIC evaluation efforts in the Indian Health Service (IHS) Billings Area. In the past year, three Tribes and the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council (RMTLC) have supported chronic disease prevention and management in a myriad of ways, some of which include:

1. Promoting a Breastfeeding Policy at Fort Peck Community College

This policy provides a safe space for students, staff, faculty, and community members to breastfeed at Fort Peck Community College through the development of a family care room complete with refrigerator, comfortable chairs, and tables. The policy aligns with two existing Montana laws on breastfeeding thereby empowering the Fort Peck community to integrate indigenous values around first foods and mother-infant feeding practices as well as enabling the normalization of this Native tradition.

2. Developing Active Living Every Day Classes at Crow Nation

Active Living Every Day (ALED) focuses on incorporating physical movement into all aspects of life through the creation of a personalized activity plan. The flexibility of this program allows for culturally appropriate modifications that ensure each session is enjoyable, achievable, and relevant.

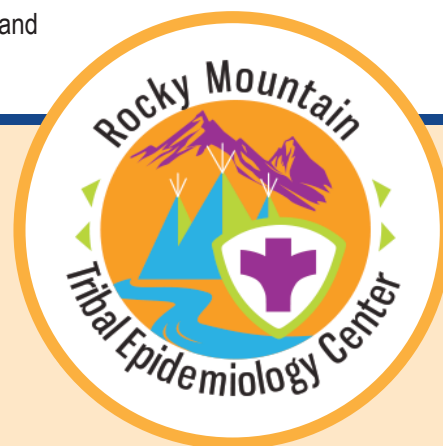
3. Implementing Healthy Living Programs with Blackfeet Nation

Two capacity-building behavioral change programs have been successfully implemented on the Blackfeet Reservation in Northern Montana: Group Lifestyle Balance. Through the training of trainers and local facilitation of these programs, participating community members have experienced positive lifestyle changes and achieved increased awareness of healthy lifestyle practices.

Activity Spotlight: Epidemiology and Surveillance

In year three, the RMTEC Director became the project's Principal Investigator, fully aligning the TEC with the mandate to support GHWIC activities. GHWIC staff and their RMTEC colleagues designed a data analysis plan for all Tribal communities in the region, to better track the top-five chronic disease burdens in these populations. Thanks to GHWIC funding, RMTEC has strengthened its capacity to meet one of seven core functions: to provide disease surveillance and assist Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and urban Indian communities to promote public health.

Today, RMTEC is expanding its surveillance work even further. Continuing with the focus on chronic disease, RMTEC is adding surveillance of infectious diseases and the top causes of injury for each Tribal community. Now, RMTEC can provide a series of reports on unique health-related circumstances in each community which, in turn, can be used as evidence for targeted intervention.



By the Numbers

152

female community members provided with a safe space for breastfeeding

To increase the prevalence of breastfeeding on the Fort Peck Reservation, Fort Peck Community College (FPCC, a GWHIC grantee) wrote and passed a policy regarding the support and encouragement of breastfeeding for employees. This policy enables mothers to continue breastfeeding their children after they return to work. Due to the success of this policy, FPCC has offered to support other tribes throughout the region in developing similar policies to encourage and support new mothers.

"...Implementing a lactation policy in the work/school setting allows for us to be more family friendly. As a community college we serve the community and having this policy in place, as well having a lactation room, hopefully encourages more mothers to attend school or return [to school]."

- Olivia Headdress

384

adult American Indian Tobacco surveys collected

No Tribally-specific data previously existed around tobacco use in the Montana and Wyoming area. The Adult American Indian Tobacco survey enabled RMTEC to bridge this gap and determine priority areas focused on commercial tobacco prevention, cessation, and policy creation. The survey was completed on every reservation in Montana and Wyoming, making it possible to tailor tobacco related efforts to the specific needs of each Tribal community.

"The Northern Cheyenne People, in attendance at the 2017 Labor Day Pow-wow, were eagerly filling out the tobacco survey. The tobacco survey is a beginning in helping ourselves and relatives in dealing and ridding the commercial tobacco scourge that threatens and kills our traditions."

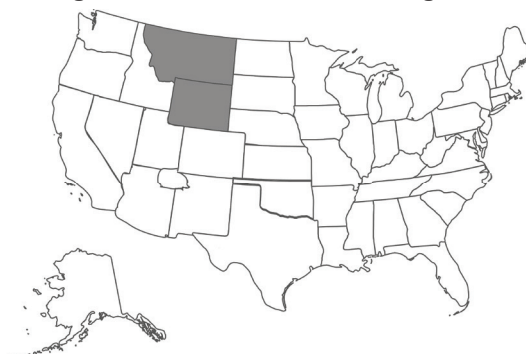
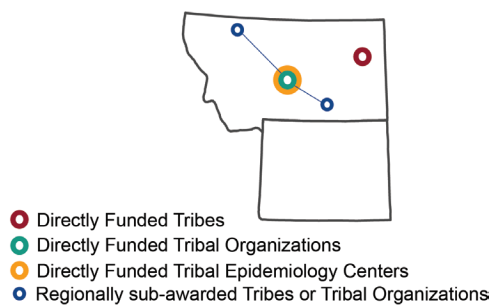
- Rick Wolfname

45

new partnerships created to foster cross-sectional collaboration

Thanks to GHWIC funding, RMTEC has expanded its reach to many organizations involved in American Indian health. By fostering this network, RMTEC has increased collaboration and awareness to amplify the degree of impact through partnership and leveraged resources with those working on chronic disease prevention and management in the area.

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



Additional Area Tribes partnered with or funded by RMTEC and RMTLC:

- Blackfeet Tribe
- Chippewa Cree Tribe of Rocky Boy
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- Crow Tribe
- Fort Belknap Indian Community
- Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes
- Little Shell Chippewa Tribe
- Northern Cheyenne Tribe

