

ALASKA NATIVE EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTER

A REGIONAL GOOD HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN INDIAN COUNTRY UPDATE

ALASKA 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

Alaska Native Epidemiology Center (ANEC) coordinates GHWIC evaluation in the Indian Health Service (IHS) Alaska Area. In the past year, ANEC worked with five Tribal Health Organizations (THOs) and other partners to enhance chronic disease prevention and management by:

1. Increasing Opportunities for Physical Activity

The Healthy Futures Challenge (HFC) is a statewide school-based physical activity challenge. ANEC partnered with HFC to increase outreach to rural schools that had been less likely to implement the challenge. Seven schools joined the challenge for the first time and one school saw all 364 of its students participate. ANEC also supported HFC to provide an opportunity for teachers who offered the challenge to receive continuing education credits (CEUs).

2. Promoting Tobacco Cessation

Some partner THOs expressed concern about showing Public Service Announcements (PSAs) from the national Tips from Former Smokers Campaign due to the graphic nature of some of the PSAs. ANEC conducted a series of focus groups to address this concern and gathered input that Tribal health partners and the State of Alaska can use to inform decisions about which PSAs to share in hospital/clinic settings and on broadcast or social media.

3. Providing Training and Technical Assistance

ANEC focused training and technical assistance efforts on increasing partner site staff capacity for policy, systems, and environmental change work. In February 2017, ANEC hosted a 3-day, interactive training by the Midwest Academy for staff from THO partner sites and other tribal and community partner organizations. Attendees reported using what they learned to advance their local policy and systems change goals.



Activity Spotlight: “Teach-back” Training for Health Care Providers

The “Teach-back” method is an evidence-based strategy health care clinicians can use to ensure information is explained clearly and to gauge patient understanding. In October 2016, ANEC staff received permission from the creators of “Teach-back” and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) leadership to add “Teach-back” training to the web-based ANTHC HealthStream Learning Center. Approximately 4,000 employees at ANTHC and four Tribal Health Organizations serving 158,674 Tribal members statewide have access to the training in HealthStream. In March 2016, the Maniilaq Association incorporated the “Teach-back” method into their Discharge Planning Policy and Procedures where “at the time of discharge, the patient, family, and/or significant other will verbalize understanding and repeat back instructions (using the “Teach-back” process) related to diet, medications, activities, treatment, follow-up appointments, community referral for services, and equipment.” As of April 2017, 81 Maniilaq providers were trained in the “Teach-back” method. By providing this method to partners, ANTHC has supported communities in improving health delivery and ultimately improving care to Tribal members and their families.

September 2017

By the Numbers

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Tribal Health Organizations adopted policies to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke

7,498

Tribal members covered under a policy to improve screening and referral processes for obesity

34,493

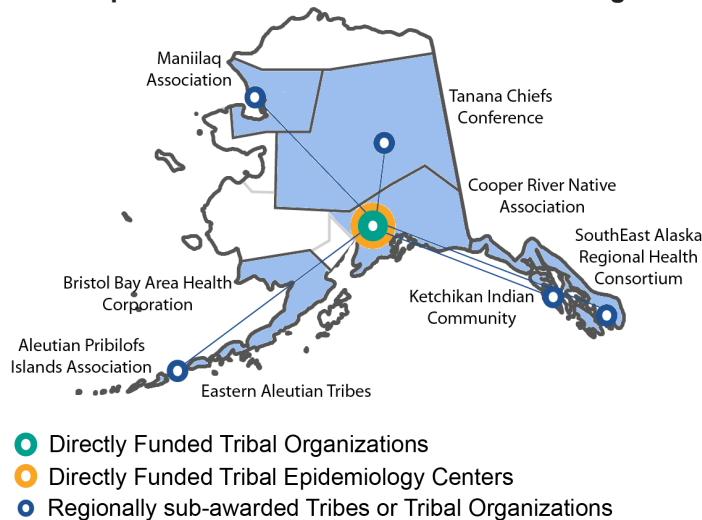
Tribal members gained access to healthy foods due to policies that promote healthier food options

To promote personal and community health by addressing the risks of tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke, the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) and the Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC) passed tobacco-free worksite policies in 2016. The policies create a 100% tobacco-free environment that applies to all employees, clients, volunteers, visitors, and vendors, Tribal organization properties, and Tribally owned or leased vehicles. The policies also apply to employees representing APIA or KIC who are conducting business off-site. As of September 1, 2017, both campuses became tobacco free and APIA and KIC will be collaborating with their communications departments to continue to implement and promote their tobacco-free worksite policies.

Obesity was identified as a priority in Maniilaq Health Center's community health assessment. To address obesity in the health care setting, Maniilaq modified their screening and referral policy for obesity. The new policy, passed by organizational leadership in 2016, requires that all Tribal members over the age of 2 years have height and weight measurements and Body Mass Index (BMI) documented in the medical record. Additionally, an electronic health record reminder is generated when the calculated BMI is over 25 for adults or the 85th percentile for children, to remind the provider to offer a consultation with the dietitian.

One method used by THO partner sites to increase access to traditional and healthy foods was to advocate for healthy food policies within their organizations. In collaboration with the community and leadership, the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium serving 13,166 tribal members, the Tanana Chiefs Conference serving 13,829 tribal members, and the Maniilaq Health Center serving 7,498 Tribal members, adopted and implemented policies to improve access to healthy foods.

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



*In 2017, ANEC regionally sub-awarded to: Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Ketchikan Indian Community, Maniilaq Association, SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, and Tanana Chiefs Conference. The Cooper River Native Association, Bristol Bay, and Eastern Aleutian Tribes partnered with ANEC to reduce use of commercial tobacco and decrease exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke.

