Native American Nutrition Concerns

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Financial Disclosure

- No Financial Disclosure
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Objectives

- Past, Present & future nutrition concerns in Native American Communities
- Define & give examples of nutrition/health concerns in Native American Communities
- Demographics
- Pathways for a Healthy Native American Community
Health/Nutrition Concerns of the past

- **1787–1920**: a relationship between the government & Indian Tribes; the provision of health services to federally recognized tribes.
  - Reservations; Natives not familiar with land
  - High Infant mortality rate/limit access to clean water with poor sanitation
  - Excessive death from infectious diseases
  - USPHS COs were assigned to Indian Health programs

- For more than 120 years, Indian Health Care was transferred among different Federal Government Branches; even under the Dept of Defense.

www.ihs.gov
Concerns…

• **1921–1955:** Snyder Act Passed by Congress (basic authorization for federal health services to U.S. Indian Tribes)
  - High infant mortality rate & infectious diseases
  - No clean water with poor sanitation

• **1950s**
  - Basic Health Services provided
  - Complications of childbirth; vaccine-preventable diseases; malnutrition; basic sanitation; treatment of dysentery (severe diarrhea); acute care for injuries & TB
  - **Leading cause of death:** heart disease

www.ihs.gov
110% increased services with 72% decrease in food waterborne disease (2001–2015)
Nutrition Concerns Past to Present

- **1960s–1970** (Acculturation, Assimilation & Integration)
  - Many tribes lost language & culture
  - "Self-determination"
  - Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservation began
- **1980s**
  - Fast Foods / more women in the work force
  - Media Influence on food choices
- **After the 1990s**
  - Go large / Sonic Size / Portions
  - Less Family meals
  - Eating out more often
  - Junk Foods
Currently there are 573 Federally Recognized American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) & >100 State Recognized Tribes

- Federally Recognized Tribes receive health & educational assistance through a government agency: Indian Health Service (IHS)/Dept. of Health & Human Service (DHHS)
- *Indian Health Service was established in 1955*
- Majority of IHS facilities are in the Western United States (US) & Alaska

www.ihs.gov
IHS Clinical Staff—2007/2011/2019

- 900/900/776 Physicians
- 300/300/270 Dentists
- 500/650/798 Pharmacists
- 2600/2700/2380 Nurses
- 90/103/200 Registered Dietitians

In several isolated locations; traveling teams of IHS physicians, dentist, nurses and dietitians delivered health care on–site on an intermittent schedule.

www.ihs.gov
Increase use of IHS 1990–2008

www.ihs.gov
As of 2017

- An estimated 5.6 million people are classified as AI/AN
  - (1.7% of total US Population)
- 1.2 million AI/AN live on the reservation or other trust land
- 60% AI/AN live in metropolitan areas
  - (this is the lowest metropolitan percentage of any racial group)
- 1.6 million AI/AN are under the age of 18, which makes up 28.7% of AI/AN

https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh
In 2017

- 51.3% AI/AN had private insurance
- 43.2% AI/AN had Medicaid coverage
- 14.9% had no health insurance

- Family Median Income for AI/AN $45,448
  - 30.5% >16yo work in management/professional occupations
  - 21.9% live at the poverty level

- 83.8% have a High School Diploma
- 19.6% have a Bachelor’s Degree
- 6.8% had an advanced graduate degree

https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh
Barriers to Quality Medical Care

- Culture/tradition, geographic isolation, reliable transportation and low income.

- Leading diseases & cause of death
  - Heart Disease, Cancer, Complications of Diabetes, stroke & unintentional injuries

- High Prevalence/Risk Factor
  - Mental health/suicide, obesity, substance abuse, sudden infant syndrome, teenage pregnancy, liver disease and hepatitis

www.ihs.gov
Partnerships: tribal leaders, health care professionals, businesses, community members and individuals

Example: MoGro—mobile grocery (eliminate “food deserts”)

http://www.mogro.net/index.html

Increase RD/N to patient ratio:

Southwestern Dietetic Internship Consortium
Pathways for a healthier Native American Community

- Prevention through promotion & education:
  - Healthy Start Act—legislation passed by Navajo Nation Council in 2008

- Let’s Move in Indian Country by Michelle Obama

- Four Main Goals:
  1. Creating a healthy start on life.
     - IHS Baby Friendly Hospitals
  2. Developing Healthy Learning
  3. Communities Increasing Physical Activity
  4. Increasing Access to affordable, healthy and traditional foods
Dine’ Food Guide

T’óó bikiinígo da’adá (Eat just enough)

T’áá hwó’ají t’éego Na’ázdíits’qód (It’s up to you to exercise)
Questions?

Hózhóñgo ’liná
A Beautiful Life