

HEALTHY LIVING, HEALTHLY CHOICES

EDUCATING NATIVE COMMUNITIES ABOUT HIV/AIDS

September 16, 2008 -- The National Native Capacity Building Assistance (CBA) Network (National Native American AIDS Prevention Center [NNAAPC], Commitment to Action for Seventh-Generation Awareness and Education: HIV/AIDS Prevention Project [CA7AE: HAPP], and the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. [ITCA]) is announcing the launch of the 2009 National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day campaign.

National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is a national mobilization effort designed to inform Native Communities about the presence of HIV/AIDS in Native populations (American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians). It is designed to encourage these populations across the United States and Territorial Areas to get educated, get tested and get involved in HIV prevention.

Historically, Native communities have suffered higher rates of numerous health disparities, including HIV/AIDS. For example, though American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) account for only 1.5 percent of the U.S. population, in 2006 they had the 3rd highest rate of HIV/AIDS diagnoses at 14.6 per 100,000 persons*. Similar increases of HIV/AIDS infections have also been seen among Native Hawaiians. As of December 31, 2007, in the state of Hawaii, Native Hawaiians represented 21 percent of the total population yet they accounted for 13 percent of the total reported AIDS cases. It is important to note that accurate data is often difficult to obtain for all Native populations. This can lead to under reporting, with actual numbers being higher than current estimations. These increases in numbers may be linked to the devastating impact of the use of methamphetamine in some communities, a situation which often leads to unprotected sexual encounters.

To address HIV impact on Native communities, a collaborative effort has been made by the three Native CBA agencies, as part of a national initiative funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The services provided are free to all Native communities and organizations serving Native populations. The National Native American AIDS Prevention Center focuses on strengthening organizational infrastructure and on adapting & training people on use of interventions for HIV prevention. CA7AE: HIV/AIDS Prevention Project, out of Colorado State University, focuses on strengthening community access to and utilization of HIV prevention services through support of local mobilization efforts. The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. focuses on strengthening community planning for HIV prevention by increasing Parity, Inclusion, and Representation (PIR) of Native people in HIV planning groups.

For more information about our services or to request awareness day products such as posters, buttons, and “save the date” cards, please visit the following websites: NNAAPC at www.nnaapc.org; CA7AE-HAPP at www.happ.colostate.edu ; and ITCA at www.itcaonline.com . Funding and support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has made National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day possible.

To find an HIV testing site near you, visit www.hivtest.org. To learn more about all the HIV/AIDS awareness days, please visit www.AIDS.gov.

*Based on new released estimates on HIV/AIDS data for ethnic groups, however, not all categories have been updated in this release. The new estimates are based only on *22 states confidential name-based HIV reporting*.

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