

Prevention Tracks

Supporting the prevention efforts of Minnesota's Tribal and Urban American Indian Communities

A Publication of the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center and the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services-Chemical Health Division

Keeping Tobacco Sacred: Spiritual vs. Commercial Use

Tobacco addiction

American Indian smoking prevalence varies across the United States, but is highest in the Northern Plains area, including Minnesota. American Indians in this area smoke cigarettes earlier, at higher rates, and with more severe health consequences. In Minnesota, four of the five leading causes of death among American Indians are related to tobacco misuse: cancer, coronary heart disease, diabetes, and chronic lung disease. American Indians have higher rates of cancer compared to other racial groups in Minnesota, and higher rates than American Indians in other parts of the U.S.; most is due to much higher lung cancer rates. Men and especially women in this area have high rates of diabetes, and 44% of American Indians with diabetes smoke cigarettes. Also, American Indians from this area have the highest cardiovascular disease death rates.

Tobacco history

Many American Indian tribes have used tobacco in sacred and medicinal ways for centuries. Many tribes have stories and songs, ways and purposes for sharing tobacco. Tobacco can be offered as a gift to the Creator or given as a gift when honoring someone or asking them for help. It can be burned in a pipe, mixed with sage and burned in a shell, or placed in an open fire. While American Indians have used tobacco for various spiritual

reasons, Europeans commercialized it for monetary gain and personal pleasure. In the 19th and 20th century, federal policies and institutional practices promoted the extermination or assimilation of Indian people. American Indians were prohibited from practicing traditional ceremonies and speaking tribal languages. As Europeans came to America seeking freedom of religion, Indian people were denied the right to practice their own spirituality until the Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. It is likely that commercial tobacco came to be used for traditional purposes as a way to "hide in plain sight." This substitution may factor into the high rates of commercial tobacco used by American Indians today.



American Indian Community Tobacco Project

This is the information that spurred the **American Indian Community Tobacco Project (AICTP)** into action. Funded by Clearway Minnesota, the AICTP is a unique partnership between the University of Minnesota and the Twin Cities American Indian community. "We knew something had to be done to get commercial tobacco out of our homes and our ceremonies. We knew the answers on how to do this were in the hearts and souls of the people in our community. We came up with a research plan and went about listening to what American Indian elders thought about the issues of tobacco in our community," said Kris Rho-



MINNESOTA INDIAN WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER (MIWRC)



State of Minnesota DHS-CHD

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A Letter from the Director, Chemical Health Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services

As the new director of the Chemical Health Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services I wanted to take this opportunity to say hello and tell you a bit about myself.

Since 1986, I have been one of 20 researchers in the US who participates in an ongoing drug abuse monitoring network of the National Institute on Drug Abuse. In that capacity I regularly write reports on drug abuse trends using the most recent available data from medical examiners, hospital emergency rooms, treatment centers, and law enforcement. This has given me a long term, broad-based perspective on emerging drugs of abuse, patterns of use and populations at risk. It also helps me appreciate how these issues in Minnesota compare with those in other states and nations.

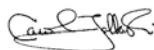
In 2000 I wrote the reference book, *Dangerous Drugs, An Easy-to-Use Reference for Parents and Professionals*. I have published numerous articles and reports on drug abuse trends. I have served in an advisory capacity to the US Food and Drug Administration, the National Institute of Justice, the American Bar Association, the RAND Corporation, and the National Drug Intelligence Center. I worked within Minnesota State government for about 20 years before I went to Hazelden in 1997. Two months ago I returned to State government to lead the Chemical Health Division.

As the state agency responsible for Minnesota's response to alcohol and drug abuse and addiction, the Chemical Health Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services partners throughout the year with other public and private entities and tribes to help educate people about the nature of the disease of addiction, and to advance evidence-based approaches to its prevention and treatment within the State.

As a person born and raised in Minnesota I am pleased that we have a tradition of helping people out. Each year over 20,000 Minnesotans receive addiction treatment services. As a Division we are committed to helping ensure that every Minnesotan gets help when they need it, regardless of who they are, where they live or what they do.

I look forward to working with you on investing in prevention, treatment and recovery. Only by working together can we hope to achieve long-term public health, public safety, and quality of life in our communities.

Thank you,



Director, Chemical Health Division
Minnesota Department of Human Services



3rd Annual Connecting Our Lifeways: Traditional Tobacco Use and Contemporary Abuse

November 8th—9th, 2007

Jackpot Junction Casino and Hotel, Morton, MN

Presented by the Minnesota Native American Council on Tobacco (MNACT)

Learn about:

- Traditional tobacco use teachings and practices
- Historical significance, imagery, and exploitation by the Tobacco Industry
- Patterns of American Indian smoking and quitting
- Special Youth Track sponsored by the Indigenous Peoples Task Force with funding from the CDC, RIW

Download application at www.indigenouspeoplestf.org or contact Suzanne Nash at (612) 722-6248 or SuzanneN@indigenouspeoplestf.org.

Keep Tobacco Sacred Continued...

des, coordinator. Three hundred adults took part in the interviews and over 300 youth completed surveys.

Traditional use today

Tobacco is still used by Indians. In fact, 9 out of 10 American Indian adults and 6 out of 10 teens use tobacco for traditional reasons. Interestingly, smokers had the lowest use of traditional tobacco.

Quitting smoking

Quitting is not easy, but many do it every year. Who's trying to kick the habit and who's succeeding? These questions and others are answered in a new report, *Patterns of smoking among American Indians in Minneapolis-St. Paul*. The report shows that two-thirds of those surveyed want to quit and more than half have tried to quit in the past year. Smokers who live in a smoke-free home and have family/friends who want them to quit are more likely to try to quit. There are lots of challenges to quitting and the report finds that very few American Indian

smokers are using nicotine replacement therapy -- even though it doubles the chances of success. The addiction to nicotine is powerful. Elders reported several attempts to quit smoking. Some had successfully overcome the addiction; while others were still struggling with it. *"You know when I quit before, people were always saying, 'Do you want a cigarette?' And then after I started, then nobody would ever offer me any."*

- Anishinaabe male, age 62.

The report, *Patterns of smoking among American Indians in Minneapolis-St. Paul*, along with others are available through the American Indian Community Tobacco Project web site: www.aictp.umn.edu, or upon request at (612) 626-8574.

This article and other information for this newsletter was submitted by Kris Rhodes of the American Indian Community Tobacco Project. To share information about your prevention based program or project please e-mail: preventiontracks@miwrc.org

Respecting One Another

Boozhoo, Biindigaan!
 Help yourself to some
 Soup and fry bread.
 Sit down, stay awhile.
 How are those little ones?
 Fix them a plate.
 Nice to see you can
 Stay and relate.
 Pass the fry bread
 and the wild rice too.
 We have lots to talk about
 I haven't seen a lot of you.
 All done eating already?
 Sorry, you can't smoke!
 When it comes to the children
 It just makes them choke.

- White Earth Reservation Tobacco Program



Community Perspectives

Here is what some of the adults interviewed by the American Indian Community Tobacco Project (AICTP) had to say about traditional uses of tobacco today:

"It happens naturally, it doesn't have to be a ritual that stands out. When I run from my house to my car, I stop and offer tobacco along the way and then I give thanks. I don't remember every morning. But, every morning when I do remember, I do that."

-Dakota female, age 59

Commercial tobacco is a common choice for spiritual use. There are many possible explanations for this. As one elder put it: *"People are growing lazy and complacent. It's easier to go to the store and get American Spirit or whatever when you are going to a wake and you set it out there. The truth is that if you really want to show respect for ceremonies that are involved in sending a person off to the spirit world, you go out and harvest that asema. You are out there and praying. It becomes more significant then."*

-Anishinaabe male, age 68

A bowl of cigarettes at Indian wakes and funerals has become the norm. *"Tobacco has been used at the wakes and the funerals a long time. A lot of the things that were done years ago is being replaced by these cigarettes and the modern way of life."*

-Anishinaabe female, age 69

"I think it'll come back full circle where Indian people will realize that you don't mix the two, like at the wakes or at the drums. I think after it is done enough times, I think people are going to start to get the message that we have to stop using commercial tobacco for our ceremonies."

-Anishinaabe male, age 58.

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MINNESOTA INDIAN
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If you have any comments or would like to contribute ideas for this newsletter, we encourage you to send an e-mail to preventiontracks@miwrc.org. We would like to hear *your* stories and get *your* feedback. Thank you!

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Research Pathways

Recommended Reading Resources

The Circle news did a seven month series on tobacco issues in the American Indian community. Find issues April—November 2007 at: www.thecirclenews.org

AICTP Introductory Report. Tobacco: Telling Our Story

AICTP Elder Talking Circles. Tobacco: Our Elders Speak

Patterns of tobacco use in a sample of American Indians in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Nicotine & Tobacco Research Volume 9, Supplement 1 (January 2007)

(<http://www.epi.umn.edu/research/aictp/presentations.shtml>)

Events-Fall/Winter 2007

November 8th—9th, 2007 – 3rd Annual Connecting Our Lifeways: Traditional Tobacco Use and Contemporary Abuse, Jackpot Junction Hotel and Casino, Morton, MN. Contact Suzanne Nash at (612) 722-6248 or SuzanneN@indigenouspeoplestf.org

November 30th, 2007 – Vendor day, Taco Sale and Bake Sale, 10am – 2 pm, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center
For more information contact Nancy Smith at (612) 728-2027 or nsmith@miwrc.org

January 24th, 2007 – Winter Tiny Tot Powwow, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center
For more information contact Nancy Smith at (612) 728-2027 or nsmith@miwrc.org

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Ten Tips To Quit Smoking

Quitting smoking often requires several attempts. Smokers shouldn't feel ashamed or alone if it takes them many tries to quit. Here are 10 ways to make quitting easier:

- 1. Prepare yourself.**
Make a list of your reasons to quit.
- 2. Pick a quit date.**
Get rid of ashtrays, lighters, and all cigarettes.
- 3. Make your car and home smoke-free.**
It is healthier for others and will help you not smoke.
- 4. Get support.**
Tell everyone that you are quitting and ask for support. Ask someone to quit with you.
- 5. Save the money.**
Smoking is expensive – a pack-a-day smoker spends \$2,500 a year.
- 6. Notice what triggers cravings.**
Alcohol, coffee, stress and other smokers can make you want to smoke – avoid these if you can – try to drink a lot of water, chew gum and exercise.
- 7. Ask about medications.**
There are new medications such as Chantix, Wellbutrin, the nicotine patch, and gum that can increase your chance of success.
- 8. Pray.**
Offer tobacco and ask for help.
- 9. Get your mind off smoking.**
Keep busy, talk to a friend or take a walk.
- 10. Stay away from that first cigarette.**
Even one can make you start back up. Cravings will go away after 10 minutes whether you smoke or not.

Resources to Quit Smoking:

- Fresh Start, Cass Lake Indian Hospital
Contact Roleen (218) 335-3200
- Gego Zagawaaken, Mille Lacs Reservation
Contact Marlene (800) 709-6445 x7812
- Living In Balance, Native American Community Clinic, Minneapolis
Contact Connie (612) 872-8086
- Minneapolis Indian Health Board smoking cessation (612) 721-9800
- QuitSmart, Grand Portage,
Contact Jennifer (218) 475-2235
- Waybinigay smoking cessation for Native women, Minneapolis
Contact Lisa (612) 870-1723
- Wiidookowishin QUITPLAN Center, Fond du Lac & Duluth
Contact Laurie (218) 878-3707

Tobacco Prayers

English Tobacco Prayer

I offer this tobacco today
To help me with what
I want to do.

Ojibwe Tobacco Prayer

Gichi Manidoo
Asemaa Nibagidinaa
Wiidookawishin noongom
Da-gashkitooyaan
waa-izhichigeyaan
Mii iw.

Dakota Tobacco Prayer

Anpetug de candi icu heced
taku icamu wacin hena omay-
akiye kte.

Translated by the Wicoie Nandagikendan Urban Immersion Project.

For more information about the Wicoie Nandagikendan Urban Immersion Project please contact the Alliance of Early Childhood Professionals at (612) 721-4246 or e-mail: allecp@aol.com

**Tobacco (English)
Asema (Anishinabe)
Cansasa (Dakota)
Dahnee (Ho Chunk)**



Minnesota Indian
Women's Resource
Center



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Insert - Side 2

Ideas for Preventing Tobacco Addiction

Nine out of ten American Indian adults believe tobacco is causing problems in the Indian community. There are many ideas for what needs to be done to turn these problems around. Here are what some of the adults interviewed by the American Indian Community Tobacco Project (AICTP) had to say about preventing tobacco addiction. Take a look at this list and see if there are ways you can be a part of the solution...

Lead by example.

"The Indian way of teaching is by example, we will show you."

Anishinaabe female, age 55.

Parents talk to their kids about tobacco.

"Parents and relatives need to caution their young children about tobacco. If you use it in a different way, it could hurt you mentally, spiritually and physically."

Anishinaabe female, age 58.

Parents set "no smoking" rules for their kids.

Use traditional teachings to model respect.

"We need elders who don't smoke cigarettes to pass on the messages of tobacco."

Lakota male, age 74.

Community wide education.

"I think we all have to get involved to educate people. It will take a whole community movement to change things."

Lakota female, age 55.

Better help for quitting smoking.

"I have no idea how we could get these kids not to smoke. Unless we just stop smoking and they will get used to seeing people not smoking and then it's just a given that as an Indian, you don't smoke."

Dakota female, age 60.

Resources

MN American Indian Tobacco Prevention & Control Initiative

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Office of Tobacco Prevention and Control is collaborating with American Indian reservations and two urban organizations that are addressing tobacco issues. For more information contact: Kelly Milam, Grants Manager Office of Tobacco Prevention & Control Minnesota Department of Health (651) 201-3666

kellymilam@state.mn.us

Clearway Minnesota

Clearway Minnesota is an independent non-profit serving Minnesotans statewide. The organizations mission is to enhance life in Minnesota by reducing tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke through research, action and collaboration. Visit www.clearwaymn.org for RFP announcements.

Minnesota Native American Council on Tobacco (MNACT)

Call Suzanne (612) 722-6248



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NO SMOKING

SPIRITUAL USE VS. CONTEMPORARY ABUSE