



National Indian
Council on
Aging

Newsletter

What's Inside

Elder Health

NMAO-TAC

NICOA Conference

NCAREE Update

Meet the Board

SCSEP Updates

Message From Randella Bluehouse Executive Director

The National Indian Council on Aging, Inc. is proud to announce the release of our new redesigned quarterly newsletter. The new NICOA newsletter is intended to keep you updated on the great work in advocacy NICOA is conducting on your behalf. The newsletter will also feature information and resources about Elder health and wellness.

We also invite you to submit articles from your community, your region, and your Elder Councils about what's new in Indian Country in regard to Native Elder news. NICOA desires to keep in close communication with you as our member and ensure that we hear your voice as it relates to Aging in Indian Country.

Thank you,

Randella Bluehouse, Executive Director
National Indian Council on Aging, Inc.



Aging in Indian Country Quarterly News
January/2016

Elder Health



Healthy Eating; Traditional Eating

Healthy eating in the modern world is not always easy. Fast food and prepackaged foods offer inexpensive and easy alternatives to healthier foods or cooking from scratch. Even in remote locations, you can count on finding snacks like burgers, chips, candies, and sodas. As you know these kinds of foods can be harmful to our health?

A poor diet can have dramatic impact on the lives of Elders. AI/ANs face a predisposition – a greater likelihood of developing—obesity and diabetes. Diet and nutrition play a crucial role in the overall risk that an individual experiences throughout life. Historically, however, AI/ANs did not face these health disparities. History shows how AI/AN communities came to face these disparities and also points towards how these trends might be reversed.

Disparities Related to Diet

Research suggests that the “modern” western diet is detrimental to the health of all consumers and even more so for Elders. AI/AN Elders face disparate rates of obesity: nearly 40% of men and more than 46% of women are obese. These rates are highest among Elders, age 55-64, and are lower among older Elders.

The rates of diabetes among AI/ANs are more striking: more than 16% of AI/ANs have diabetes, a rate more than twice as high as that of the general population in the US as a whole. Among AI/AN Elders, 30% - nearly 1 in 3 - have diabetes. The Pima of Arizona have seen rates of diabetes as high as 60% in their community. The consequences of diabetes left untreated include amputations, blindness, and death, and AI/ANs are twice as likely to die from diabetes.

A variety of factors contribute to the high rates of diabetes and obesity among AI/AN Elders. Along with the predisposition for these conditions, diet, exercise, and other factors are important contributors. It is important to note that while AI/ANs are predisposed to these conditions, they were very rare just 100 years ago.

Traditional vs. Contemporary Diets & Practices

Diets have changed dramatically since the introduction of European foods into the diet of AI/ANs. The diets of AI/AN ancestors contained more complex carbohydrates (*such as whole grains, peas, beans, potatoes*) and fewer fats (*such as meats, dairy products, and oils*). While diets vary from nation to nation, traditional foods consisted of those that could be gathered and hunted in the local area, and sometimes included agricultural products like corn, squash, and beans that were introduced before European influence on diets.

The shift in the way AI/ANs eat came as a result of being removed from their homelands and relocated to reservations. The federal government discouraged AI/ANs from continuing their traditional hunting and gathering traditions, and provided commodity foods such as white flour from wheat and lard to AI/AN communities. Such food products are completely foreign to the traditional AI/AN diet. Combined with the destruction of traditional practices, the diet of the present day has contributed to the disparities in the health of AI/ANs.

Those eating a contemporary western diet now experience processed foods high in simple carbohydrates (refined sugar), salts, and fats. One example of such a food that is commonly found in Indian Country is “frybread.” Frybread found today is a product of the shift from traditional foods to government-issued commodities. Frybread and foods like it - whether homemade or store-bought - have little nutritional value and can negatively impact health.

Access to Food

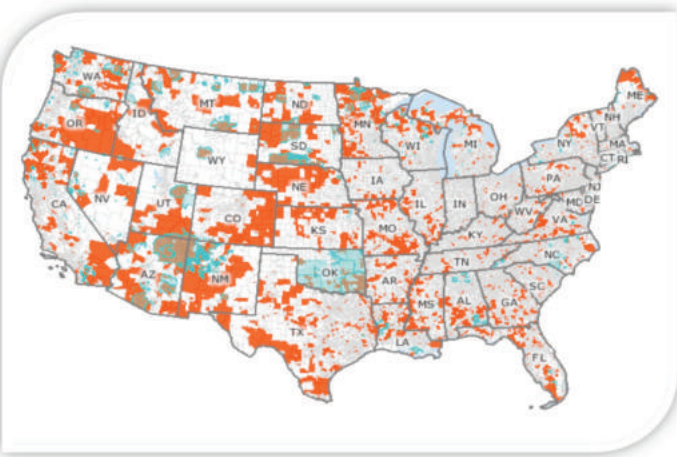
Elders living on a reservation or in an isolated, rural area may not only have very limited options about where to purchase food, but also difficulty accessing those places at all. Many live in what is known as a “food desert” – defined as parts of the country without access to fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually not found in low-income areas.

A food desert can exist both in rural areas and large cities alike. This means that the places many Elders call home may only have access to fast food or convenience stores, rather than healthy local food sources or grocery stores.

Eating Indigenously

Recently, some activists in partnership with tribal nations and universities have begun to push for a return to traditional AI/AN diets. One such movement is the “Decolonizing Diet Project” which was started by Professor Marty Reinhardt at Northern Michigan University. The Decolonizing Diet Project takes the perspective that change in dietary practices that resulted from the colonization of North America is like a form of oppression. This project and others like it in AI/AN communities across America are researching what foods existed in the traditional diet prior to colonization. Broadly, these types of projects share common objectives. By engaging Elders, the knowledge of generations is built and shared among the community in support of the local food system. Such programs also educate communities about traditional diets and the importance of embracing and reviving traditional practices. By doing so, these programs also help increase physical activity among AI/ANs by encouraging hunting, gathering, gardening, and traditional preparation of food. They also promote the preservation of culture and access to healthy traditional foods within AI/AN communities.

ORANGE shows FOOD DESERTS, BLUE shows RESERVATION BORDERS, and BROWN shows OVERLAP between the two.



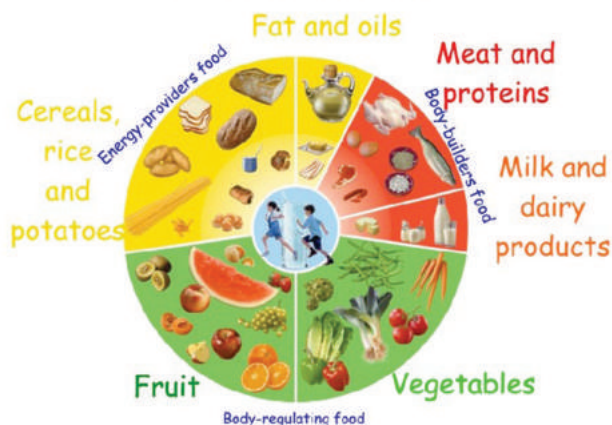
Food desert by Census tract: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome>.

Changing Your Diet for Better Health

All Elders can benefit from a healthier diet. Consider the following:

- ♦ Make one change at a time. Changing diets is not easy and habits can be hard to break. By making one change at a time, it will be easier to change habits successfully.
- ♦ Reduce how many simple carbohydrates (refined sugars) you eat. Snacks like soda and candy contain very high amounts of these simple sugars and replacing them with healthier choices can make a big difference to your health.
- ♦ Control portions – how much is served. Eating until satisfied rather than stuffed is a good habit to create.
- ♦ Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- ♦ Use healthier cooking techniques regardless of what is being cooked. Avoid frying foods, and try instead to bake, steam or boil more often.
- ♦ Try healthy traditional recipes and cooking with traditional ingredients. Eating traditional foods can be a healthy choice that preserves and promotes culture.
- ♦ Try gardening to grow the foods you like locally and eat healthier from your own yard.

The food wheel



Learn More

To learn more about traditional foods movements, please visit the NICOA website at www.nicoa.org/resources/useful-links.

National Minority Aging Organization

Technical Assistance Ctr. on Native Aging Update

Christine Herman, Project Coordinator

Hello and Happy New Year! We are excited to start this year on a high note. As a result of many months of focused work on behalf of our Elders, we have much to share. Our team has been buzzing behind the scenes to create, coordinate and present our Sacred Bundle – a special gift to you, our honored members. It features a multitude of resources including the Needs Assessment. Results from the NICOA 2014 Conference, Health and Wellness Fact Sheets, our inaugural Native Elders Storytelling DVD and self care items from our hearts to yours.

The purpose of this Sacred Bundle is first to celebrate and honor YOU and your ongoing

contribution to the wellbeing of Elders in Indian Country. Secondly, it highlights the key concerns and issues facing American Indian/Alaska Native Elders. This bundle of information also helps to educate the aging network and policy makers about aging in Indian Country.

We hope you take time to read and explore the content of your Sacred Bundle. We would also love to hear from you about what is most informative or helpful to you at this time.

Sincerely,
Christine Herman

Easy and Healthy Recipes for Elders

Puffed Wheat Parfait

This beautifully layered breakfast contains vitamins, fruit, protein and calcium from yogurt, and fiber from whole grain cereal. Soft puffed wheat is easy to chew, but you may substitute granola or other whole grain cereals to suit your tastes.

- ¼ to ½ cup strawberries
- ¼ to ½ cup blueberries
- ½ to 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1 cup puffed wheat (substitute your cereal of choice)
- Sugar (or sweetener) to taste

Thin slice the strawberries and sweeten them with sugar or a sugar substitute. Sweeten the yogurt. In a clear plastic or glass drinking vessel, add the strawberries to the bottom, followed by an inch of yogurt. Add about one inch of puffed wheat, followed by one half inch of yogurt. Top the parfait with blueberries, a dollop of yogurt in the center and sprinkle with the remaining puffed wheat. Serve immediately.



For nutrition information and more recipes like this visit this website: <http://blog.comforcare.com/fresh-easy-inexpensive-cooking-for-senior-citizens>

COMING SOON!!

2016 NATIONAL INDIAN COUNCIL ON AGING BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Join us in Scenic Niagara Falls, NY

September 13-15, 2016

Go to www.nicoa.org and click on the conference tab to pay your

Membership Dues NOW

BOARD POSITIONS TERMING OUT AND UP FOR RE-ELECTION

Alaska Region
Great Plains Region

Midwest Region
Southern Plains Region

Southwest Region
Pacific Region

VACANT BOARD POSITIONS

Rocky Mountain Region - National Association Title VI Grantees, (This representative to the Board shall be seated as a Board member upon his/her ascendancy to the Chairmanship of the National Association of Title VI Grantees)

BOARD NOMINATION PROCESS

The Board Nomination Packet will be available on the NICOA website: www.nicoa.org. A Board Nomination Packet along with \$35 Fee must be completed for all terming out board positions and vacancies.

Any questions please call (505) 292-2001 or email info@nicoa.org. **August 31 DEADLINE.**

For specific information on how to apply for a Board Position or submit a resolution for the 2016 Biennial conference please go to www.nicoa.org.

National Consortium on Aging Resources for Elders Rebecca Morgan, Program Coordinator

We are so glad to be involved in a new venture that ties directly to NICOA's mission, improving economic wellbeing for American Indian/Alaska Native Elders. The idea behind this new grant is to educate AI/AN Elders and those that work with them to prevent elder financial exploitation. Last fall Randella Bluehouse and I attended a meeting in Washington, DC to meet with the other partner organizations. We shared a presentation on Elder financial exploitation with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) employees in

Albuquerque, NM. A primary goal of the grant is to develop a knowledge base of culturally appropriate training and technical assistance materials. These materials will allow us to more effectively reach our American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Elders as well as the Aging Network who are directed to provide services and care for our elders. These efforts will help to address the ongoing disparities that prevent our Elders from aging well in their homes and communities.

Meet the NICOA Board of Directors

Regions in Red are terming out—up for re-election

Eastern Region -11	Eddie Tullis, Chairman	Poarch Creek
Northwest Region - 1	James DeLaCruz, Sr., Vice Chair	Quinault
Southwest Region - 6	Lucia Trujillo,	Pueblo of Sandia
Midwest Region - 9	JoAnn Jones, Treasurer	Ho-Chunk Nation
Alaska Region - 12	Cyndi Nation	Tanana Chiefs
Eastern Oklahoma Region - 10	Rhonda Weaver	Quapaw
Great Plains Region - 7	Robert LaFromboise	Sisseton-Wahpeton
Navajo Region - 5	Ralph Bennett, Jr.	Navajo
Pacific Region - 3	Vacant	
Southern Plains Region - 8	Adele Mihesuah	Comanche
Rocky Mountain Region - 2	Vacant	
Western Region - 4	Phyllis Antone	Gila River
Title VI Association.	Vacant	

ROCKY MOUNTAIN AND PACIFIC REGIONS: If you know of an appropriate candidate to fill these vacant board positions, please contact Randella Bluehouse (505-292-2001 ext. 25).



SCSEP Updates

Susan Chapman, Program Director



Subsidizing job training and building real world skills are the key to NICOA SCSEP's success in Indian Country since 1989.

Goals of SCSEP

SCSEP helps low-income job seekers age 55 and over gain the skills needed to re-enter or remain in the workforce.

The program serves a dual purpose:

- Providing participants with temporary, useful part-time training and grant sponsored income to prepare them for finding employment in the community.
- Helping employers address their workforce shortages by promoting transition to unsubsidized employment and becoming a resource for trained, qualified mature workers.

NICOA, operates in fourteen designated counties in the following 14 states: Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. Although NICOA operates through an American Indian set aside grant from the Department of

Labor, we provide services to anyone in our service area eligible for the program.

Western Region Office located in Tempe, AZ serves designated counties in the states of Arizona, California, and Washington. Team members are:

Sharon Dukes, SCSEP Program Manager

Darrell Begay, Asst. Program Manager

Russell Klein, Job Developer/Trainer

Renita Etsitty, Program Assistant

Central Region Office located in Minneapolis, MN and Albuquerque, NM serving designated counties in the states of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, S Dakota, N Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Team members are:

Theresa Salazar, SCSEP Program Manager NM)

Jean Howard, Asst. Program Manager (MN)

O'Neal Echoles, Job Developer/Trainer (MN)

Yolanda Harrison, Employment Specialist (NM)

Southeast Region Office located in Oklahoma City, OK and serves designated counties in Oklahoma, N Carolina, Alabama and Florida. Team members are:

Joncia Johnson, SCSEP Program Manager

Arnetta Yancey, Asst. Program Manager

Caroline Hogan Christophel, Job Developer/Trainer

If you are interested or know of an individuals that would benefit from this program contact NICOA home office in Albuquerque at (505) 292-2001 or visit our website at www.NICOA.org.

Save the Date!

NICOA 2016

Biennial Conference

September 13 - 15, 2016

Niagara Falls, NY



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WE NEED YOUR HELP



Please invest your donation to help NICOA strengthen our mission to advocate for improved comprehensive health, social services and economic wellbeing of American Indian and Alaska Native Elders. Our goal is to ensure that our Elders have the opportunity to age in place -- in their own homes and communities.

You can also help by becoming a member of NICOA. Help us to educate our tribal, state and national leaders about aging issues in Indian Country. You may complete a membership form and pay your dues by visiting our website at NICOA.org or calling us in Albuquerque at (505) 292-2001.

As a member you will gain a better understanding of how national policies impact services to Elders. You will also learn how you can become a well-informed advocate for Elder services in your community. Join us for the 21st Biennial National Indian Conference on Aging, at the majestic, Niagara Falls, NY - September 13-15, 2016.