



NEWS RELEASE

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**American Indian Cancer Foundation Receives Funding to Improve Health and Prevent Chronic Disease in Native Communities**

**ST. PAUL, MN**— American Indian Cancer Foundation (AICAF) received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the first year in the five-year Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program. The REACH funding will help AICAF improve health, prevent chronic diseases, and reduce health disparities among our American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations highest burden of chronic disease in Oklahoma City, OK.

AI/AN families are living on or near reservations where tremendous health inequities exist in comparing the population health of racial/ethnic groups. As of the 2010 census, 22% of AI/AN (1.14 million people) live on reservations or trust lands. Moreover, 28.3% of AI/AN live below the federal poverty line, reaching 38% to 68% in some areas. In Oklahoma, poverty rates for AI/AN populations are highly variable, with rates lower in Oklahoma County (20%) but much higher for children (23%) and single mothers (32%).

Heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and stroke are among the most common causes of illness, disability, and death in the United States. They are also leading drivers of the nation's \$4.1 trillion in annual health care costs. These chronic conditions—and the factors that lead to them—are more common or severe for some racial and ethnic groups. AICAF will work with partners and local coalitions to enhance existing resources, address Oklahoma City's health needs, and reduce health disparities.

“CDC is excited to announce this new REACH funding to 50 communities across 32 states and the District of Columbia,” said Terry O’Toole, PhD, MDiv, program development and evaluation branch chief in CDC’s Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. “With this funding, organizations will plan and carry out local, culturally-appropriate programs to address a wide range of health issues among racial and ethnic minority groups where health gaps remain. REACH intends to improve health where people live, learn, work, and play.”

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As one of 50 REACH recipients, AICAF will implement proven public health strategies for:

- Healthy food choices are easier everywhere—promoting food service and nutrition guidelines, expanding fruit and vegetable voucher incentives and/or producing prescription programs.
- Safe and accessible physical activity—connecting pedestrian, bicycle, or transit transportation networks to everyday destinations.
- Tobacco prevention and control policies—helping prevent young people from using commercial tobacco products, helping people quit using commercial tobacco products, and eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke.

A complete list of CDC’s REACH recipients and additional information can be found on the [REACH website](#).

### **About the American Indian Cancer Foundation**

AICAF is a national Native-led and Native-governed non-profit organization established to address the cancer burdens faced by American Indian/Alaska Native people. AICAF strives to be a partner trusted by tribes and organizations and is working toward effective and sustainable cancer solutions based on cultural teachings and wisdom. Visit our website today at [www.aicaf.org](http://www.aicaf.org).

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