



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AMERICAN INDIAN CANCER FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF ITS 6TH ANNUAL BLUE BEADS CAMPAIGN FOR NATIONAL COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

SAINT PAUL, MN – American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) people are experiencing higher colorectal cancer rates than any other ethnicity in the United States. As the American Indian Cancer Foundation (AICAF) observes National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in March, we invite you to stand with us and other Tribal and Urban Indigenous communities to raise awareness of the 6th Annual Blue Beads campaign.

This year, we are proud to announce that the Blue Beads campaign is co-sponsored by Exact Sciences and Mayo Clinic. Through this dynamic sponsorship, we aim to amplify our message and reach even more individuals within Indigenous communities, providing vital education, tools, and resources to promote colorectal health, screening, and early detection. Join us in the fight against colorectal cancer by filling out the Blue Beads Screening Pledge.

As colorectal cancer is third most commonly diagnosed cancer among AI/AN people, AICAF remains committed to eliminating the cancer burdens of Indigenous people through improved access to prevention, early detection, treatment, and survivor support.

This year, AICAF with Exact Sciences and Mayo Clinic, are supporting 30 Tribal and Urban Indian Clinics to implement innovative, culturally responsive, community-based smart practices that engage and motivate community members in working towards effective and sustainable colorectal cancer solutions. This collaborative effort will provide education tools, promotional materials, policies, and support for these clinics to both raise awareness of colorectal cancer and increase colorectal screenings. Each participating clinic has planned activities to engage with their tribal communities, two of these Clinic Champions are highlighted here.

The White Earth Indian Health Service will offer opportunities for community to contribute to storyboards featuring colon cancer education, ribbon trees to commemorate the lives and memories of loved ones with colon cancer and “Get Your Rear in Gear” promotional tshirts will be available for staff to wear throughout the month to spark conversation about Colorectal Awareness. The White Earth Health Service is geared up to provide education, and hopes to increase cancer screening rates during the month of March and continue the effort throughout the year.

The Bois Forte Medical Clinics (Vermilion & Nett Lake Clinics) will present in-person Colorectal Cancer Awareness education to community members and clinic patients during in-person exams. Education materials and tools will be hand-delivered and discussed during appointments. Each patient scheduled will be offered gut friendly snacks, participation prizes and entered into a raffle. Throughout the month of March, community members will find clinic staff dressed in blue promotional t-shirts, promoting colorectal health and colorectal awareness month. The clinics will engage the whole tribal community by promoting “Blu Lighting” where every home is encouraged to put up blue lights in recognition of Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

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AICAF encourages our relatives to prioritize their overall health. Gut health is a vital aspect of overall well-being. By getting screened for colorectal cancer and incorporating healthy traditional foods into everyday diets, we can take proactive steps toward preventing and managing this disease. It is important to talk to your health care provider about your gut health, your family history, and when screening is right for you. Share your healthy recipe with us today for an opportunity to be featured in our upcoming healthy cookbook! Fill out the form [here](#).

Everyone plays a role in raising colorectal cancer awareness in their communities, as early detection is always the key to survivorship. Join us to discuss healing through education, traditional foods, and engaging in meaningful conversations about colorectal health. Learn from the stories Indigenous colorectal cancer survivors shared with AICAF, [here](#). Together, we can pave the way for improved gut health among our relatives and future generations.

Get Involved!

Join AICAF during one of our special virtual gatherings this month as we honor #BlueBeads:

Facebook Event Page

Blue Beads: Wear Your Blue Beads All Day!

Date: Thursday, March 21st, 2024

Time: All Day

[Click here to join](#)

(Webinar) Ostomy with Mayo Clinic

Date: Wednesday, March 25th

Time: 12:00 pm CT

[Click here to register](#)

Blue Beads Fireside Chat

Native Resiliency: The Path Forward for Closing the Gap on Colorectal Cancer

Date: Thursday, March 28th, 2024

Time: 12:00pm CST

[Click here to register](#)

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.

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