



NEWS RELEASE

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AICAF FOCUSES ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR CANCER SURVIVORS AND CAREGIVERS DURING THE SIXTH ANNUAL CELEBRATE INDIGENOUS LIFE CAMPAIGN

Learn about life after a cancer diagnosis during National Cancer Survivors Month this June.

ST. PAUL, MN— June 2024 will mark the sixth anniversary of AICAF's Celebrate Indigenous Life campaign (CIL). AICAF recognizes the importance of elevating the lives of community members who have experienced a cancer diagnosis and are survivors. Too often, the stories behind survivorship are overlooked. At AICAF, our goal is to ensure that these stories are published, heard and celebrated.

Throughout the journey of survivorship, mental wellness is as crucial as physical well-being. The strength, resilience, and courage it takes to be on this journey deserves acknowledgment, as do the struggles, fears and moments of vulnerability. AICAF encourages embracing the full spectrum of survivorship experiences, supporting our relatives through every peak and valley. Together in community with one another, AICAF strives to foster a culture of compassion, understanding, and mental wellness as we navigate life beyond cancer.

Mental health plays an important role in healing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI):

- Symptoms of psychological distress and cognitive concerns are experienced by 3 out of 4 people with cancer (CDC).
- While it is recommended that cancer patients in all clinical settings receive distress screening, about one-third of patients actually talk to their providers about psychosocial needs and concerns, with even fewer receiving treatment for symptoms of distress (CDC).
- Studies have shown that anxiety and distress are more common among long-term cancer survivors compared to those without a history of cancer (NCI).

Given the data, AICAF urges conversations about mental wellbeing during the cancer journey. During the CIL campaign, we will provide a space for community to share [Messages of Hope](#), an online form for any Native person whose life has been impacted by cancer.

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Messages of Hope aims to share encouragement through personal experiences, tips, tricks, and words of wisdom. We encourage community to rally together, offering support and encouragement during

these difficult days. Your participation can greatly impact a survivor's healing process, both spiritually and emotionally.

As we share Messages of Hope on social media, read, reflect, and share these posts to build a supportive community and encourage our relatives to join. Submit your own message for a chance to win a beautifully designed tumbler by a Native artist, as a thank you for your contribution.

More ways to Celebrate Indigenous Life include [wearing lavender on Thursday, June 20th for CIL Day](#). Honor the lives and stories of survivors everywhere and tag us or use [#CelebrateIndigenousLife](#) or [#CILDay](#) to be featured on our social media. Learn more about survivorship and life after a cancer diagnosis from our [Survivor Story Series](#).

Our [2024 CIL Campaign Toolkit](#) is now available to use! Download it to engage community members, health professionals, and leaders in raising awareness of survivorship in Native communities. This comprehensive Toolkit includes resources for planning events, sharing on social media, and driving policy change.

[Donate](#) to CIL and support Indigenous cancer survivors, caregivers, and their families. While grants and contracts fund specific projects, **your** donations support our broader initiatives, such as strengthening our programs and expanding our campaigns. Generous donors like you play a vital role in making this work happen!

To learn more about Indigenous cancer burdens and solutions, visit AmericanIndianCancer.org.

About the American Indian Cancer Foundation

AICAF is a national Native-led and Native-governed nonprofit established to address the tremendous cancer burdens faced by Native people. AICAF strives to be a partner trusted by tribes and organizations, working toward effective and sustainable cancer solutions based on cultural teachings and wisdom.

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