

# Sacred Life

Wiconi Wakan



## Great Plains Tribal Leaders' Health Board Awarded the Smokefree Air Leadership Award

The Great Plains Tribal Leaders' Health Board (GPTLHB) is honored to be recognized during the (virtual) annual Smokefree Air Challenge Awards hosted by the American Nonsmokers 'Rights Foundation (ANR) in conjunction with the Annual Public Health Association. This year, GPTLHB along with Southern Plains Tribal Health Board were awarded the Smokefree Air Leadership Award! GPTLHB is grateful for this award and would like to thank the partners with ANR, Black Hills Center for American Indian Health (BHCAIH), National Native Network, BC Slots and representatives from Turtle Mountain and Standing Rock communities. To hear the recording of the "Great Plains Casinos and the Benefits of Reopening of Smoke-free" see page 7 for the recording link! Congratulations GPTLHB and the Good Health and Wellness team!

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## The Great Plains Good Health and Wellness

The Great Plains Good Health and Wellness Program is excited to continue into our second year of funding of the Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country (GHWIC) Initiative. We are pleased to announce our returning partners as well as adding a new program to the team. Congratulations to the Santee Sioux Tribe Health and Wellness Center, The Oyate Teca Project (Oglala Sioux Tribe), Missouri Breaks Industries Research Inc. (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe), the Spirit Lake Tribe, and the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Diabetes Center! The awarded programs will provide on-going efforts to plan and implement community-clinical linkages and culturally adapted policy, system, and environmental change strategies to; prevent obesity, prevent and control commercial tobacco use, support type 2 diabetes prevention, and support heart disease and stroke prevention. Strategies such as increased purchasing of healthy foods, increased breastfeeding, reducing the prevalence of commercial tobacco use, and reducing type 2 diabetes are designed to help reduce the burden of chronic disease and improve health in the Great Plains Tribal communities. We are very excited and honored to be working with these programs! Please see the next page for more details on each program.

In good health,  
The Good Health and Wellness team

# Tribal Partners Making Policy, System & Environmental (PSE) Changes

## SWO Diabetes Center



Recently the SWO Diabetes Center and Indian Health Service's Pediatrician and Registered Dietitians have been trying to establish a plan to combat the obesity rate plaguing our young people at an alarming rate since Covid-19. When I received a funding announcement from Great Plains Good Health and Wellness, I knew this was the critical component of getting our plan together and out there to our community.

With this fantastic opportunity, we can implement a program with families as a whole. With the partnership of Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, Special Diabetes Program for Indians, AstraZeneca Foundation, Indian Health Service, we will begin a Family Program that will gear to individual family's needs. We will take all families referred from IHS at a high priority, but we will also be working with all other families at risk. Families will begin with a Health Assessment, goal setting, contracts, weekly meetings, and meal prep. We will utilize the CDC's Prevent T2 Curriculum for the weekly meetings. This is new territory for us, and we are excited about this unique opportunity for our community.

## Missouri Breaks

MISSOURI BREAKS  
*Creating Opportunities for Health*



Our Missouri Breaks team is excited to continue advocating for additions to a Chronic Disease Chapter in the CRST Public Health Code, most notably a policy to restrict flavored tobacco

products' sales. Highlights of our new activities planned for the coming year include a "Know Your Numbers" campaign, creation and dissemination of locally-inspired exercise videos to support people doing work or school from home, establishing healthy vending machines in our community, and launching a new "Healthy Selfie" challenge on social media as a platform for community members to motivate each other to live a healthy lifestyle. We want to thank the other GPGHW grantees for sharing their excellent work to inspire some of our new activities!

## Santee Health and Wellness Center



The Santee Health & Wellness Center's project will strategically combine evidence-based and promising-practice holistic health concepts to integrate physical activity, nutrition education, experiential culinary education, and mindfulness activities into the community to foster a culture of wellness. The multidisciplinary team will further advance PSE goals and objectives that will improve tribal food and beverage systems by enhancing the Culinary Health Education and Fitness (CHEF) program to prevent obesity; improve upon a more detailed home-based chronic disease management program to support heart disease and stroke prevention, and advance land-use design within the community to encourage and promote safe and accessible physical activity. These wellness efforts will link community resources and clinical services to emphasize support, prevention, and detection by developing culturally relevant materials using social media, visual education, and other educational tools and communication strategies.

## Spirit Lake Special Diabetes Program for Indians



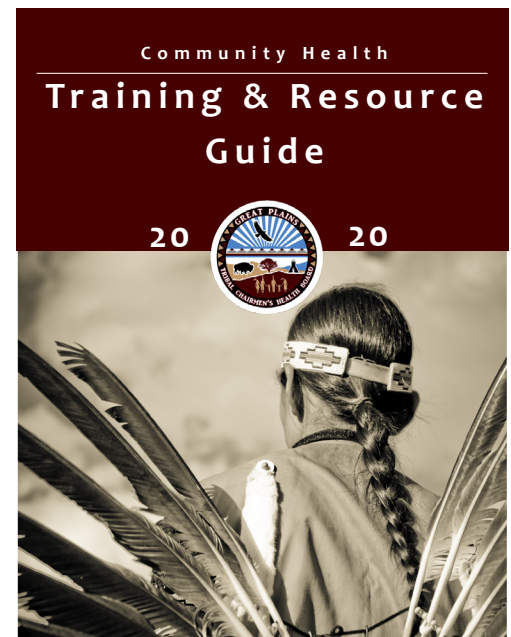
The SDPI project goal relates to developing and implementing strategies to fight against Type 2 diabetes, obesity, and prevention of other chronic diseases within the Spirit Lake Nation.

Our first two strategies to continue the fight involve efforts to reduce Type 2 diabetes incidence, particularly for youth at risk. School screenings, an after-school program, and a summer youth program will be conducted and delivered to the at-risk group. The programs are geared towards weight reduction through various physical activities and nutritional education, including a raised-garden bed project to motivate children to make healthier eating choices. The garden project will be specific to our Dakota culture, involving our local Dakota Language program and elders to provide us with the terminology and skills our ancestors used while creating their gardens many years ago. The last strategy includes reducing diabetes-related complications by delivering a week-long "diabetes camp" to youth diagnosed with diabetes. This strategy's overall goal is to use a team-based approach to build the participants' confidence and knowledge levels to become more independent in their diabetes management and become familiar with their diabetes team. We encourage parent/guardian participation with all strategies to inspire the family to make healthy changes together rather than just individually.

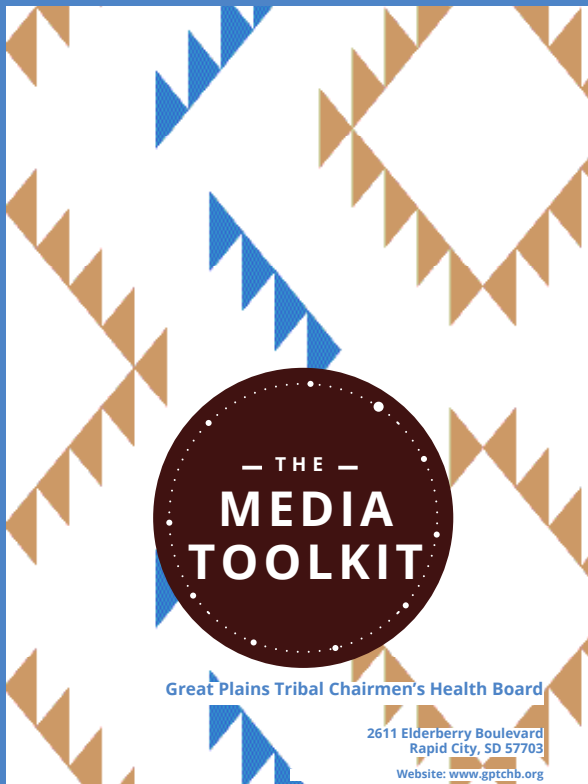


# Great Plains Good Health and Wellness 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium

On September 10, 2020 the Good Health and Wellness Program hosted its 6th Annual Good Health and Community Wellness Symposium. The annual symposium is usually held in Rapid City with a packed 2 day event. However, this year the symposium was held virtually during a three hour webinar. The event highlighted the Good Health and Wellness Program's tribal partners and the efforts they have put forth in creating policy, system, and environmental changes and community clinical linkages in their communities. Projects such as healthy vending, promotion of healthy foods and beverages at tribal events and activities, a cansasa cultivation site, virtual culinary health demonstrations, community lifestyle and health education cookbook creation, and providing of refrigeration units to house fresh vegetables in community stores were all executed and presented this year. Guest speakers on the related topics of health promotion and disease prevention and traditional storytelling within were also on the agenda. A total of 52 people participated in the symposium, including program grantees, community members, and other project partners. When reflected on what participants learned the majority of those who participated in the evaluation survey mentioned the value of learning from partners efforts. On participant stated, "It was great to see what others are doing and how they are working to improve health outcomes." The Good Health and Wellness program would like to thank all those who attended and to our partners for presenting. We look forward to the 7th Annual Good Health and Community Wellness Symposium and hope to be able to see everyone in person!



**[Click on the 2020 Training & Resource Guide to download a digital copy](#)**



## Media Toolkit Training and Strengthening Communications Strategies

The Great Plains Good Health and Wellness Program is introducing its 2020 Media Toolkit. This Toolkit assists programs and organizations to execute health communications through various forms of media. The purpose of this Media Toolkit is to recommend strategies, provide resources, and educate tribal partners about how to encourage media collaboration with planners, communicators, educators, and other health professionals in their communities. Join us to go in-depth on the various ways this guide can help your organization strengthen communications strategies and impact communicating with your audience.

Watch the training here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWHqLbstSs>  
← **[Click on the media toolkit picture to download a copy.](#)**

**[FOR A HARD COPY OF THE TOOLKIT PLEASE CONTACT MADONNA DOLPHUS AT \[m.lendshishorse@gptchb.org\]\(mailto:m.lendshishorse@gptchb.org\)](#)**



# NOVEMBER IS AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH

November is National Diabetes Month. This month is a time for communities to team up and bring attention to diabetes. Among those aged  $\geq 65$  years, one in four is estimated to have diabetes, and one in two has prediabetes. Persons with prediabetes are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. American Indians and Alaska Natives have a greater chance of having diabetes than any other US racial group. Diabetes is also one of the most common chronic conditions in school-age youth in the United States, affecting about 193,000

youth under 20 years old. However, type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed through a structured lifestyle change that promotes weight loss, healthy eating, and increased physical activity. So what can you do to get involved during national diabetes month? Start by knowing the risk factors and be aware of your numbers. You can take a prediabetes risk test online at <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/takethetest/> to determine your risks. If your number determines you are at risk for prediabetes, don't panic, diabetes is preventable! Contact your healthcare provider and let them know your

concerns about prediabetes and ask if there is a lifestyle change program in your community. If you are overweight, discover how to eat healthily and add more physical activity into your day. Regular physical activity means getting at least 150 minutes a week of brisk walking or similar action. That's just 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Learning how to manage stress, stay motivated, and solve problems can help you with everyday challenges. During November, be proactive in protecting yourself and your family from the health risks of diabetes.

## CWOY SUPPORT NAVIGATOR PROGRAM



Photo taken by a youth: Mata-Paha- Bear Butte Outing September 21, 2020. CWOY Program went on an outing to observe fall solstice. A prayer was offered, youth were able to make their own prayer ties and take to the top to offer.

American youth in the He Sapa catchment area. CWOY is informed by Lakota culture values of caring and compassion for all (Wakáŋšila) and youth are sacred (Wakháŋyeža) to strengthen connections between American Indian youth and their culture. Lakota values are used by CWOY to develop culturally-adapted and evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies designed to increase social connectedness, reduce death by suicide and

suicide attempt rates, and expand knowledge of how to support American Indian youth. CWOY currently deploys support navigators called CWOY support navigators who are entrusted to work with key stakeholders to provide early intervention and long-term support. Support Navigators serve as advocates, mentors, resource connectors, and good relatives to our youth and families.

**Nisnala Mayani Sni**  
*(You don't walk alone)*  
**Serves Native Youth Ages 10-24**  
**Living in the He Sapa Area.**

**Contact: 605-721-1922 or**  
**605-858-3804**

Connecting With Our Youth (CWOY) is a values-based initiative to reduce the rate of suicide for Native



Photo By: Dr. Rich Braunstein, CO-PI, during this outing.

# COVID-19 DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTS AMERICAN INDIANS/ALASKAN NATIVES INDIVIDUALS



Photo taken from High Country News

By: Alicia Edwards  
October 5, 2020

Across the nation, COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted Indian Country and tribal populations. A report from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) showed that American Indian/Alaska Native individuals (AI/AN) are 3.5 times more likely to become ill with COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the Great Plains Area, similar disparities exist. In South Dakota, AI/ANs represent 8% of the state's total population but 12% of cases and 19% of COVID-19 deaths.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, in North Dakota, AI/ANs make up 5% of the state's population and 7% of its COVID-19 cases.<sup>3</sup> The trend continues in Nebraska, AI/ANs represent <1% of the state's total population, 1% of COVID-19 cases, and 3% of COVID-19 deaths.<sup>3</sup> In Iowa, AI/ANs represent <1% of the state's population and 1% of the state's total COVID-19 cases.<sup>3</sup>

We know the information about COVID can be confusing. You may have unanswered questions. For this reason, we called on GPTLHBs Medical Epidemiologist, Meghan Curry O'Connell, to provide clear, concise, and accurate information.

Dr. Meghan Curry O'Connell, MD, MPH, is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation. Dr. O'Connell was recently brought on board at GPTLHB to provide medical and public health expertise to tribal communities and tribal members across the GPA. She is a trained family medicine physician and public health practitioner. She entered medicine to serve Native communities.

## Can you tell us who should get tested for COVID-19?

Despite confusing messages in the media around COVID-19 testing, Dr. O'Connell recommends getting a COVID-19 test, "if you have symptoms of COVID, like cough,

shortness of breath, or fever. You should also get tested if you've had contact with someone who has COVID." COVID-19 testing is important because "a positive test result helps epidemiologists and other infectious disease experts track the virus and try to stop it from spreading." Typically testing and disease surveillance are not the only public health strategies used to manage a disease outbreak like the one we face with COVID-19. Dr. O'Connell recommends following "guidelines on quarantine and isolation regardless of your test result." If you experience any symptoms of COVID-19, you should contact your healthcare provider for guidance.

*The best medicine is always prevention. Below are steps you can take today to protect yourself and your relatives.*

## Wash your hands often.

The following are Dr. O'Connell's comments on handwashing, "COVID-19 cannot enter your body through your hands. But you can spread the virus to yourself and others with your hands. You should wash your hands anytime you enter or leave a public place; before and after you touch your face or mask, after you blow your nose, cough, or sneeze. You should also wash your hands anytime they are visibly dirty. After using the restroom. Before preparing food. Before and after, you care for someone else, especially someone who is ill. Washing your hands can be done with soap and water or with a hand sanitizer."



## Why should we wear a mask?

Some have criticized the effectiveness of masks. The experts at the CDC recommend wearing a mask because “COVID-19 can be spread by people who do not know that they have the virus.”<sup>2</sup> Dr. O’Connell agrees with the experts, “by wearing a mask you are helping protect others from getting infected with the virus. The virus spreads through respiratory droplets when we talk and breathe. Masks can help prevent those droplets from entering the mouths and noses of those around us. Protecting them from becoming infected. The more people that wear masks when they are with others, the lower the spread of the virus will be.” This concept is called source control.

## Why should we practice social (physical) distancing and avoid large gatherings?

You’ve heard the recommendations, and you’ve probably seen the social (physical) distancing guidance in the world around you, but do you know why it is important?

Dr. O’Connell states that “people catch coronavirus from other people. The further away you are from other people, the less likely you are to catch the coronavirus from someone who is infected. The CDC recommends staying at least 6 feet away from others to protect yourself. Because it is particularly hard to stay 6 feet away from everyone in a large group, large groups should be avoided. Minimizing your contact with anyone you don’t live with is the best way to protect yourself and your circle from COVID-19.”

## Should we wear gloves for

## protection?

“In your daily activities, you do not need to wear gloves,” Dr. O’Connell explains. “Washing your hands and avoiding touching your face and mask will help protect you. If you are cleaning or caring for someone who is sick with COVID-19, it is recommended that you wear gloves for extra protection. You should always wash your hands before you put on gloves and after taking them off.”

## The flu vaccine, should we get it?

The CDC recommends that “everyone six months or older should get a flu vaccine every season with rare exceptions.”<sup>4</sup> Dr. O’Connell recommended the same, “everyone who can, should get the flu vaccine.” She continued, “the flu vaccine prevents millions of flu infections and thousands of deaths every year. This year it is especially important to get the flu vaccine because influenza causes millions of hospitalizations each year. The combination of hospitalizations for the flu and COVID has the potential to overwhelm our healthcare system. We do not know yet how getting infected with both the flu and COVID will affect people. Being infected with both viruses at the same time could make people very sick.”

You can get the flu vaccine at the Indian Health Service (IHS) and other tribal health facilities. Or search for:

<https://vaccinefinder.org/find-vaccine> in a web browser to locate the flu vaccine near you.

## Will the COVID-19 vaccine be safe?

Dr. O’Connell’s comments on COVID-19 vaccine safety, “although the development of the COVID vaccine is happening quickly, it will still need to go through the FDA approval process to prove that it is safe. Generally, vaccines are very safe and have few side effects. After developing a COVID vaccine, scientists and doctors will be able to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of that vaccine more fully.”

Together we will overcome COVID-19. Do your part. Get tested if you are ill. Wear your mask. Avoid large gatherings—practice social (physical) distancing. Wash your hands. Get your flu shot.

The Great Plains Tribal Epidemiology Center within the Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board sponsored this message. Visit the Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board website for more information on COVID-19 (<https://gptchb.org/>).





# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS

## Community Connect Broadband Grant Program

**Deadline: [December 23, 2020](#)**

The Community Connect Grant Program supports broadband deployment into rural communities where it is not yet economically viable for private sector providers to deliver service. Broadband service should benefit residential and business customers in a service area, as well as critical community facilities, such as healthcare, public schools, fire stations, and libraries. Eligible applicants include:

- State and local governments
- Federally recognized tribes
- Nonprofit organizations
- For-profit corporations

Rural areas that lack any existing broadband speed of at least 10 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream are eligible.

For more information and application visit [grants.gov](https://grants.gov)

## Udall Scholarship

**Deadline: [March 2, 2021](#)**

The Udall Foundation offers scholarships to Native American and Alaska Native undergraduate students pursuing careers related to tribal public policy, native healthcare, and the environment. Eligible applicants are Native Americans or Alaska Natives that are undergraduate sophomores or juniors at a two-year or four-year accredited institution of higher education in the United States. Up to \$7,000 for eligible academic expenses.

For more information contact:

Jason Curley  
[curley@udall.gov](mailto:curley@udall.gov)  
520.901.8564

## Dept. of Health and Human Services, CMS

[Community Health Access and Rural Transformation \(CHART\) Model](#)

CMS is providing funding for rural communities to build systems of care through a Community Transformation Track and is enabling providers to participate in value-based payment models where they are paid for quality and outcomes, instead of volume, through an Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) Transformation Track.

**Closing date: [January 6, 2021](#)**

## Covid-19 Weekly Call

**COVID-19 Weekly Call**

*Every Wednesday, 10 AM MST*

**Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/290838361>**

Bringing together Tribal, State, and Local stakeholders for weekly updates on COVID-19 in the Great Plains Area. Each has an opportunity to provide updates, with up-to-date information on what is happening at the Great Plains Tribal Epidemiology Center and across Tribal Nations and Health facilities.

**If you are unable to attend and have questions or updates please**

**Email: [brooke.mcpherson@gptchb.org](mailto:brooke.mcpherson@gptchb.org) for questions**

## Good Health and Wellness Community Webinar

[“Breaking Down the Stigma and It Starts With Our Language”](#)

**November 10, 2020 @ 1 PM MST**

Presented by: Tosa Two Heart and Amanda Flores

We will talk about the impact and importance of language. Changing our language in how we talk about mental health/ behavioral health helps change how we treat individuals with mental health concerns. We will talk how to shift our use of words in both the western and cultural context to lead to positive conversations around this subject.

## Great Plains Tribal Casinos and the Benefits of Reopening Smoke-Free

The Good Health and Wellness program in partnership with ANR, NNN, BCSlots, and BHCAIH provided a webinar on the importance and the benefits of tribal casinos in the Great Plains area re-opening smoke free in the midst of COVID-19. To watch the recorded version of this webinar visit:  
<http://keepitsacred.itcml.org/2020/08/webinar-great-plains-tribal-casinos-and-the-benefits-of-reopening-smoke-free/>

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- 6-weeks
- Up to 6 workshop participants

**Register Online**

<https://bcbh-sd-toolkit.questionpro.com/>

Topic	Start Date	Start Time
Diabetes	Oct 15	4:00 pm CT/3:00 pm MT
Pain	Nov. 10	10:00 am CT/9:00 am MT



- Virtual participation (Zoom)
- 6 weeks
- Weekly 2 ½ hour Zoom Sessions
- Up to 12 workshop participants

**Register Online**

<https://bcbh-live.questionpro.com/>

Topic	Start Date	Start Time
Diabetes	Oct. 20	10:30 am CT/9:30 am MT
Chronic Disease	Oct. 19	1:00 pm CT/12:00 pm MT
	Nov. 16	9:00 am CT/8:00 am MT
Cancer	Oct. 20	3:30 pm CT/2:30 pm MT
Pain	Nov. 2	2:00 pm CT/1:00 pm MT
Take a Step and Walk With Ease	Nov. 2	11:30 am CT/10:30 am MT (30-minute Sessions)
	Jan. 4	12:00 pm CT/11:00 am MT (30-minute Sessions)

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