

Northern California Teens Work to Reduce Commercial Tobacco in Films

In California, nearly 34% of the American Indian/Alaska Native Population uses commercial tobacco, compared to 14% of the total population statewide. The top two causes of death among the AIAN population is cardiovascular disease and lung cancer, in which commercial tobacco use is a contributing factor. With the support of United Indian Health Services, the Teen Advisory Group developed a way to help prevent commercial tobacco use among teens.



Challenge

Youth who are exposed to smoke in movies are more likely to begin smoking themselves. In the early 2000's, smoking depicted in films started to decrease, however, in 2010, commercial smoking began to increase. In 2010, a third of the top grossing films for families and children depicted commercial tobacco use. This means that movies with a rating of G, PG, and PG-13 depicted commercial tobacco use. Those youth that are exposed to the most smoke in scenes are twice as likely to begin smoking when compared to youth that have seen the least amount of commercial smoking in films.



Solution

In 2012, United Indian Health Services along with their Teen Advisory Group began to address this issue. The teens started by creating storyboards about traditional tobacco, commercial tobacco, and the dangers of second hand smoke. This allowed them to create 3 Public Service Announcements. They also created a short film about smoking and the influence of film on choosing to smoke commercial tobacco.

The teens attended the American Indian Film Festival planned to ask the Film

Institute to adopt one of following policies: Show an anti-tobacco ad before films that showed commercial tobacco use; Not show films that have tobacco product placement in them that exploit American Indian/Alaska Native culture and/or images; Not show films that depict youth under the age of 17 using commercial tobacco.

Unfortunately, they were not able to get an audience with the board, however, this did not deter their work.

The teens and United Indian Health Services also worked in the community to get resolutions that supported their efforts to raise awareness about commercial tobacco use in films. They received resolutions from Resighini Rancheria, Smith River Rancheria, United Indian Health Services, Northern California Indian Development Council, Inc.'s Wellness Committee, California Rural Indian Health Board, and Humboldt County Tobacco Education Network.

Suggested Film Policies

1. Show an anti-tobacco ad before films that show commercial tobacco use
2. Not show films that have tobacco product placement in them that exploit American Indian /Alaska Native culture and/or images
3. Not show films that depict youth under the age of 17 using commercial tobacco



Future Directions

Although the Teen Advisory Group was unsuccessful in getting the American Indian Film Institute to adopt a policy around commercial tobacco in films, they were able to successfully get resolutions to support their work. Their hope is to see other tribes and youth advisory groups create resolutions and move forward with this work. The teen advisory group and UIHS have developed a blueprint to continue this work and develop their own Public Service Announcements. If you are interested in continuing this work, please contact Wendy Rinkel at (709) 464-2919 Ext. 5041



Written by Chris Cooper, Health Education Specialist II, California Rural Indian Health Board. Photos from United Indian Health Services.

Getting Involved

The Teen Advisory Group and United Indian Health Services have created a blueprint to raise awareness about commercial tobacco use in films, create resolutions, and Public Service Announcements. The Teen Advisory Group and UIHS hope to help other Tribes and Youth Advisory Groups continue this work. Contact Wendy Rinkel at United Indian Health Services for more information at (709) 464-2919 x5041.