



Success Story

May 2015

Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Health Board is Increasing Access to Chronic Disease Programs in Tribal Communities

SUMMARY:

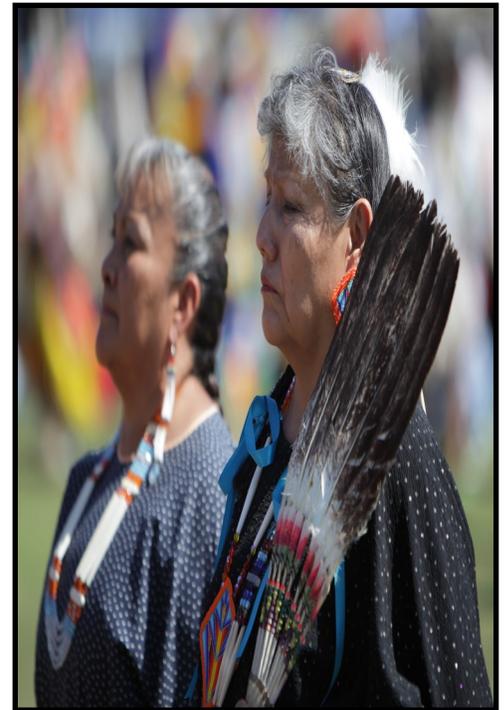
Heart Disease, Cancer, and Diabetes are the 3 leading causes of death for American Indian/Alaskan Natives aged 55 or older. Chronic disease among the American Indian/Alaskan Native communities affects their quality of life and ability to cope with having a chronic disease. The Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Health Board currently has two staff trained in the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) who will have the capabilities to go out into our tribal communities once they become a Master Trainer. This program is meant to help individuals to effectively deal with chronic disease such as diabetes, arthritis, hypertension, lung disease. The staff, Jennifer Williams and Cole Hunter, will be assisting with lay leader trainings and will become Master Trainers by September 2015. Once they become Master Trainers they will have the capabilities to go into our tribal communities to offer trainings.

CHALLENGE:

The American Indian and Alaska Native people have long experienced lower health status when compared with other Americans. Lower life expectancy and the disproportionate disease burden exist perhaps because of inadequate education, disproportionate poverty, discrimination in the delivery of health services, and cultural differences. Disease of the heart, malignant neoplasm, unintentional injuries, and chronic lower respiratory diseases are leading causes of American Indian and Alaska Native deaths (2006—2008). American Indians and Alaska Natives born today have a life expectancy that is 4.2 years less than the U.S. population (73.7 years to 78.17 years, respectively).

SOLUTION:

This clinical strategy and community linkage benefit the tribes that we work with. Assisting with the needs of 18 tribes and tribal communities in the four-state region of South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa, GPTCHB addresses the health necessities of its members by assisting in accessing health-related programs and resources.



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RESULTS:

Participants who took Chronic Disease Self-Management Program demonstrated significant improvements in exercise, ability to do social and household activities, less depression, fear and frustration or worry about their health, reduction in symptoms like pain, and increased confidence in their ability to manage their condition. This would be especially beneficial to the American Indian/Alaska Native populations. This will enable our elders in our communities to learn how to manage their chronic disease while becoming more self-sufficient and able to possibly extend their life expectancy. Topics covered in the program include: Exercise, Nutrition, Coping Skills, Communication with Physicians and other healthcare providers, Stress Management/Relaxation, Setting realistic goals, Strategies for living with a chronic condition and how to deal with frustration, fatigue, pain, Isolation, How to integrate new techniques and activities into a plan for living well, How to better work in partnership with your health care team, and how to write advance directives.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS:

The success of implementing the Chronic Disease Self Management Program will be demonstrated through the following once implemented within our tribal communities:

- Increased exercise
- Better coping strategies and symptom management
- Better communication with their physicians
- Improvement in their self-rated health, disability, social and role activities, and health distress
- More energy and less fatigue
- Decreased disability
- Fewer physician visits and hospitalizations.



“A very great vision is needed and the man who has it must follow it as the eagle seeks the deepest blue of the sky.” - Crazy Horse

QUOTES:

“I would like to take my hat off to the people who have stepped up to the plate to actually participate in something that is in almost every walk of life considered kind of strange ... so I think those participants are a very strong partner in this and what they brought is the commitment to living a healthier life with their diabetes and or other chronic conditions.” - Master Trainer, Focus Group participant

ABOUT GREAT PLAINS TRIBAL CHAIRMEN’S HEALTH BOARD:

Great Plains Tribal Chairmen’s Health Board, or GPTCHB, is a not-for-profit organization representing the 18 tribal communities of South and North Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa. Through public health practices and the formation of tribal partnerships, we work to improve the health of the Native American peoples we serve by providing public health support and health care advocacy.

