AI/AN CANCER

Cancer Health Disparities Among American Indian and Alaska Native Populations

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data reveals cancer health disparities among Native people through surveillance and research.

AI/AN populations in the United States have unique cancer patterns due to their history and culture, where they live, how they get health care, and institutionalized racism. Many Native people live on reservation lands or in remote rural areas, where their primary health care is provided by a tribally operated health program or the Indian Health Service. Rural and urban Native people often experience more poverty, lower levels of education, and poorer housing conditions compared with the general US population. View the resources below to learn more about cancer in AI/AN communities.

Linking Cancer Data with the Indian Health Service
To improve the quality of cancer statistics for Native people, CDC routinely links cancer registry data and death certificate data with Indian Health Service registration data to identify Native people correctly. Many times, they are incorrectly reported as being members of other racial groups.

Two databases are produced:

- **U.S. Cancer Statistics American Indian and Alaska Native Incidence Analytic Database**

You can explore the incidence data on the [Rate of New Cancers in American Indian/Alaska Native module](#) of the US Cancer Statistics Data Visualizations tool.

More Information

- **The Cancer Research Citation Search tool** provides links to scientific articles authored or coauthored by scientists in [CDC's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control](#).
- **Several US Cancer Statistics Data Briefs** highlight cancer incidence in American Indian and Alaska Native populations.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Population Health
American Indians and Alaska Natives have higher rates of getting colorectal, kidney, liver, lung, and stomach cancers than non-Hispanic Whites. Between 1999 and 2015, incidence rates of liver, kidney, and female breast cancers increased significantly among Native people.

Assessing Disparities

CDC’s Division of Cancer Prevention and Control uses these databases to quantify cancer disparities among Native populations. This information can be used to develop targeted intervention strategies.

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CDC scientists are researching trends in leading cancers with higher incidence rates among Native people, including colorectal, stomach, and lung cancers, as well as the disparities in treatment for breast cancer. CDC scientists have studied cancer among the Navajo and among the Haudenosaunee Nations.

References