

REACH U.S.

Choctaw Nation Lifetime Legacy Program

Talihina, Oklahoma

A REACH Action Community (AC)

One Choctaw Way
Talihina, OK 74707
(918) 567-7000

REACHU.S.

Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Across the U.S. (REACH U.S.) is a national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) program aimed at eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities. It utilizes community-based approaches to reduce the burden of chronic illness in specific at-risk populations. There are 22 **REACH Action Communities** using practice-based and evidence-based programs. These programs look at cultural and environmental influences related to health disparities and their underlying causes. They develop, evaluate, and share their culturally specific and relevant strategies and best practices.

ISSUE

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among American Indians living in Oklahoma. The Choctaw Nation Lifetime Legacy Program focuses on the prevention and control of cardiovascular disease in American Indians living in 10 ½ counties in rural southeastern Oklahoma within the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma boundaries.

ACTIVITIES

- Uses the *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* (HGHH) curriculum and the train-the-trainer model to conduct sessions on heart disease in the 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) wide campaign.
- Serves as a key partner in the recently established tribal-wide task force on obesity prevention.
- Serves on the Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board, comprised of 300+ Choctaw youth from the 10 ½ counties who volunteer to address the issues of obesity, suicide, and drug use.
- Develops age and culturally-appropriate curriculum and activities for children focusing on heart health.

- Maintains a strong presence in the community through active participation in ten community coalitions and through service on numerous sub-committees focusing on healthy lifestyles.
- Offers the presentation *The Effects of Substance Abuse on the Heart* to promote heart health in schools and other community organizations.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Choctaw Nation, as a result of recommendations made by the Lifetime Legacy staff, is implementing the following policy, systems, and environmental changes:
 - Choctaw Nation Travel Plaza director agrees to provide healthy snack options in prominent locations in their stores.
 - Implementing a point-based exercise incentive program for community members.
 - Allowing employees an additional 15-minute break for exercise purposes.
 - Implementing community gardens and farmers markets.
 - Broadcasting healthy lifestyle videos in the health facilities.
 - Healthier meal choices are being implemented in collaboration with the dietary staff at the Choctaw Nation inpatient substance abuse treatment centers
- The Jones Academy, the Choctaw Nation's boarding school, is working with Lifetime Legacy to sustain a student-maintained garden providing produce for consumption by the students and tribal elders.

Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC)
1600 Clifton Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30333
Tel: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6354
Email: CDCINFO@cdc.gov
Web: www.cdc.gov

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Community Health

