



LIVING IN WELLNESS

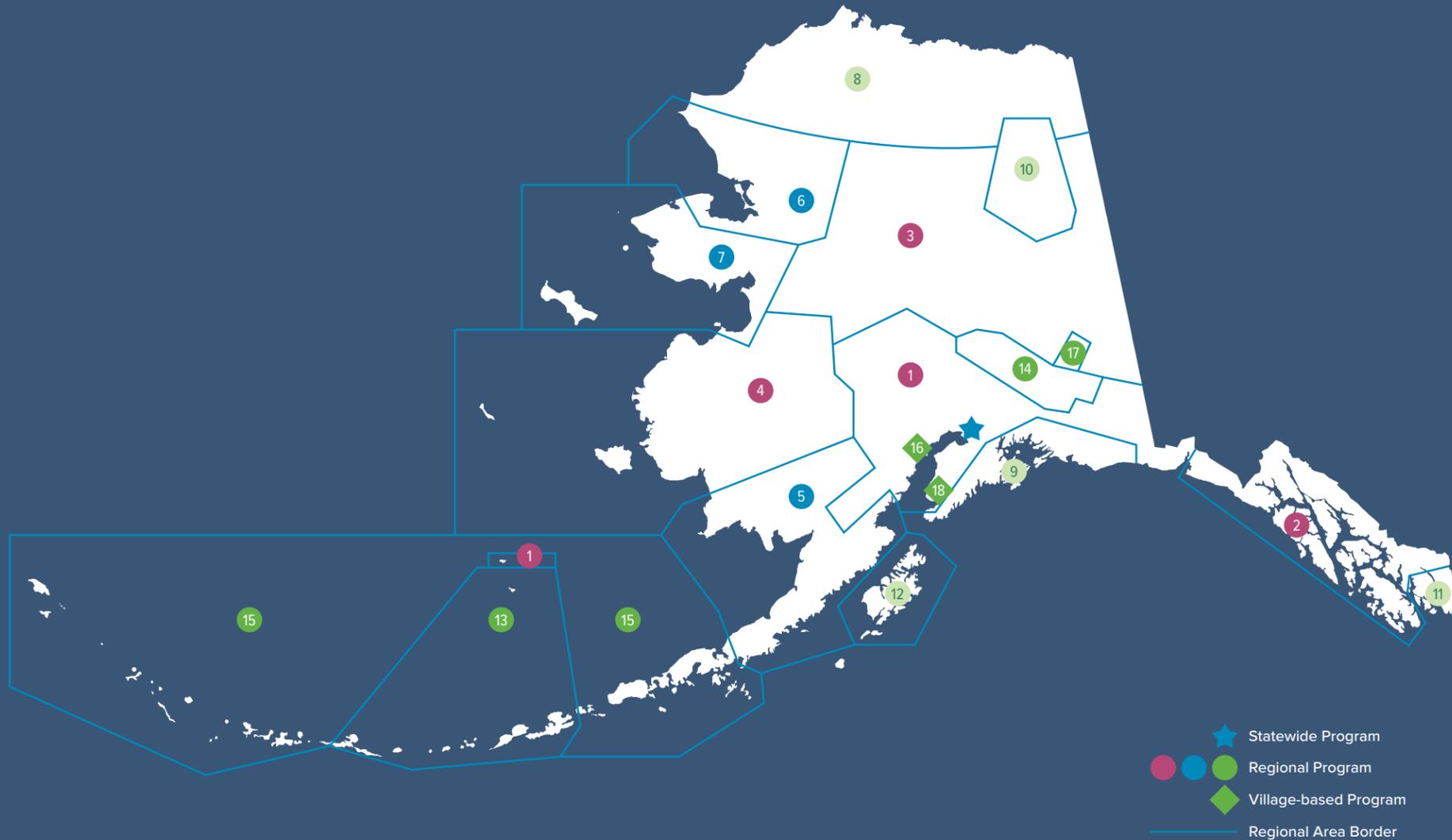
Special Diabetes Program for Indians
THE ALASKA STORY



ALASKA NATIVE
TRIBAL HEALTH
CONSORTIUM

LIVING IN WELLNESS

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Grant Programs

Funded greater than \$1,000,000

- 1 Southcentral Foundation
- 2 SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium
- 3 Tanana Chiefs Conference
- 4 Yukon-Kuskokwin Health Corporation

Funded between \$500,000–\$1,000,000

- ★ Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- 5 Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation
- 6 Maniilaq Association
- 7 Norton Sound Health Corporation

Funded between \$150,000–\$500,000

- 8 Arctic Slope Native Association
- 9 Chugachmiut
- 10 Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments
- 11 Ketchikan Indian Corporation
- 12 Kodiak Area Native Association

Funded less than \$150,000

- 13 Aleutian / Pribilof Islands Association
- 14 Copper River Native Association
- 15 Eastern Aleutian Tribe
- 16 Kenaitze Indian Tribe
- 17 Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium
- 18 Seldovia Village Tribe

SDPI in Alaska supports living in wellness through:



Treatment of diabetes

- Increasing access to quality clinical care
- Improving treatment through health professional training



Prevention of diabetes

- Youth-targeted diabetes prevention activities
- Adult programming that supports healthier diets and physical activity
- Community partnerships to sustain lifestyle changes

For Alaska, the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) is a powerful tool that provides a strong return of federal investment. It has helped support two pillars of care: **the treatment of diabetes** and **the prevention of diabetes**. For people with diabetes and those at risk, these are two key factors to living a life in wellness.

When these factors are missing, the costs to treat diabetes and its complications can be staggering.

Diabetes can be a stealthy condition that goes unnoticed until a devastating complication occurs. These complications include kidney failure, to the degree that people have to depend on kidney machines for the rest of their lives. Kidney failure that requires lifelong dialysis is the largest driver of Medicare costs. Diabetes can also cause foot and leg amputations because it damages nerves and blood vessels.

Physical activity, a healthy diet and weight control prevent diabetes and enhance diabetes treatment. Optimum medical care can reduce the risk of kidney failure and amputation. SDPI funding has been used to provide programs and activities that focus on healthy living and the availability of state of the art medical care in both urban and rural settings.

At the point where diabetes was recognized as a major health concern among American Indian and Alaska Native people, Congress established the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI). SDPI currently supports 301 programs in 35 states and provides a strong return of federal investment.

In Alaska, 19 Tribal health organizations receive SDPI funding which has reduced amputations and kidney failure. **When Congress continues this funding, current and future health care costs are managed.**



SDPI in Alaska supports living in wellness through the treatment of diabetes

SDPI funding in Alaska has supported increased access to quality clinical care and is improving the quality of treatment through regular health professional training.

Increasing access to quality clinical care

- Review and monitoring of care using the statewide Tribal health diabetes registry
- Coordinated multidisciplinary team treatment approach
- Access to high quality foot care and podiatry services

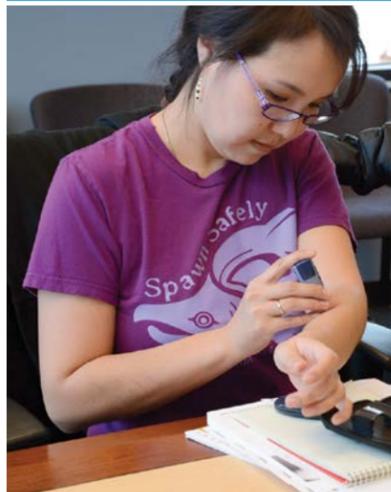
Improving treatment through health professional training

- Diabetes primary care training for community health aides and other rural providers
- Culturally relevant continuing medical education



TREATMENT

Increasing access to quality clinical care



“The SDPI audit helped us to recognize our strengths and areas of needed improvement. Due to audit data, we know that in 2017 we need to focus our key measure on diabetes education.”
Eileen Owen-Williams, Eastern Aleutian Tribes



Increasing access to quality clinical care is a challenge in remote areas of Alaska, but coordination through the Alaska Tribal Health System and our 19 SDPI program sites means that we are able to share resources and replicate program successes. These are the areas in which we have seen the most success.

Review and monitoring of care using the statewide Tribal health diabetes registry

There are nationally accepted standards of care that are known to reduce the risk of complications of diabetes. Data enables health care programs to identify services that are provided in accordance with these standards as well as those that need to be

initiated or improved. Patient registries are the source of this data. Registries form the basis for clinic teams to remind people that they need periodic monitoring and treatment even though diabetes may not cause any symptoms until a devastating complication occurs. Maintenance of data on complications of diabetes allows health care teams to identify areas in the care system that are successful in preventing complications or that need improvement.

SDPI dollars support the statewide Tribal health diabetes registry which provides data to regional Tribal diabetes teams. For example, uncontrolled diabetes can cause kidney failure that requires

people to have kidney dialysis for the rest of their lives. In Alaska this can mean having to leave home to move to the city. Diabetes can also lead to foot and leg amputation because of damage to nerves and blood vessels. The rates of these complications have decreased since the inception of the SDPI funding.

Kidney failure among Alaska Native people with diabetes

Rate/10,000 person-years, age-adjusted to the 1995 Alaska Native diabetic population



Coordinated multidisciplinary team treatment approach

Evidence indicates people at risk for diabetes treated with a multidisciplinary team approach can lower their risk for developing diabetes. The team-based approach also helps a person with diabetes to lower the risk for chronic disease complications. SDPI in Alaska has made these multidisciplinary care teams available statewide.

“In the 16 years I have worked for Chugachmiut we have had an identified diabetes team. I believe that it has helped us keep our numbers of diagnosed patients with diabetes static.”

Sue Steward, Chugachmiut

Access to high quality foot care and podiatry services

In 2004, SDPI dollars provided seed money for the first full time podiatrist in the Alaska Tribal Health System, introducing statewide services for diabetes foot care. There is now a team of three full time podiatrists all self-supported through billing, making this a sustainable service for people with diabetes.

Foot or leg amputations among Alaska Native people with diabetes

Rate/10,000 person-years, age-adjusted to the 1995 Alaska Native diabetic population



“During my almost five years at Tanana Chiefs Conference there have been no amputations for patients who regularly receive foot care.”

Kim Blood, Tanana Chiefs Conference

TREATMENT

Improving treatment through health professional training



In a state as large and geographically remote as Alaska, ongoing training for health care professionals can be challenging. Regional SDPI programs devote funding to deliver high quality, culturally relevant continuing medical education. Training provides health professionals with current best practice updates in caring for patients with diabetes or at risk for developing diabetes. Statewide training such as the annual Alaska Native Diabetes Conference and semiannual SDPI coordinators meetings provide a venue for regional SDPI programs to come together and share successes and solutions to problems.

Community health aides/practitioners are the first level medical providers in over 170 rural Alaska communities. The Advanced Diabetes Health Aide Course is specific to the role of the Alaska community health aide and has been shown to improve care for people in rural Alaska communities with diabetes and people at high risk of developing diabetes. Approximately 500 health aides have completed the three month course. Additionally, the health aides themselves have lost weight, stopped drinking soda and quit tobacco thereby becoming role models at the community level.

"I've been telling a lot of people pop has a lot of sugar, and if they want to lose weight they should stop drinking pop. Pop makes you gain weight. After the class, I stopped drinking pop. I lost a lot of weight. I was 221 lbs, and now I'm at 172 lbs. People ask how to lose weight like me. I say, stop drinking pop. A lot of people in my village have stopped drinking pop now."

Maniilaq health aide, graduate from the Advanced Diabetes Course



SDPI in Alaska supports living in wellness through prevention of diabetes

Diabetes is preventable by healthy food choices, regular physical activity and weight management. Preventing diabetes before it starts is critical to helping Alaska Native and American Indian people live longer, healthier lives within their communities. SDPI program sites are promoting diabetes prevention activities that reflect the strength of Alaska Native culture and traditions. The activities are adapted to the circumstances of rural communities:

- Youth-targeted diabetes prevention activities
- Adult programming that supports healthier diets and physical activity
- Community partnerships to sustain lifestyle changes such as healthy food choices, regular physical activity and weight management



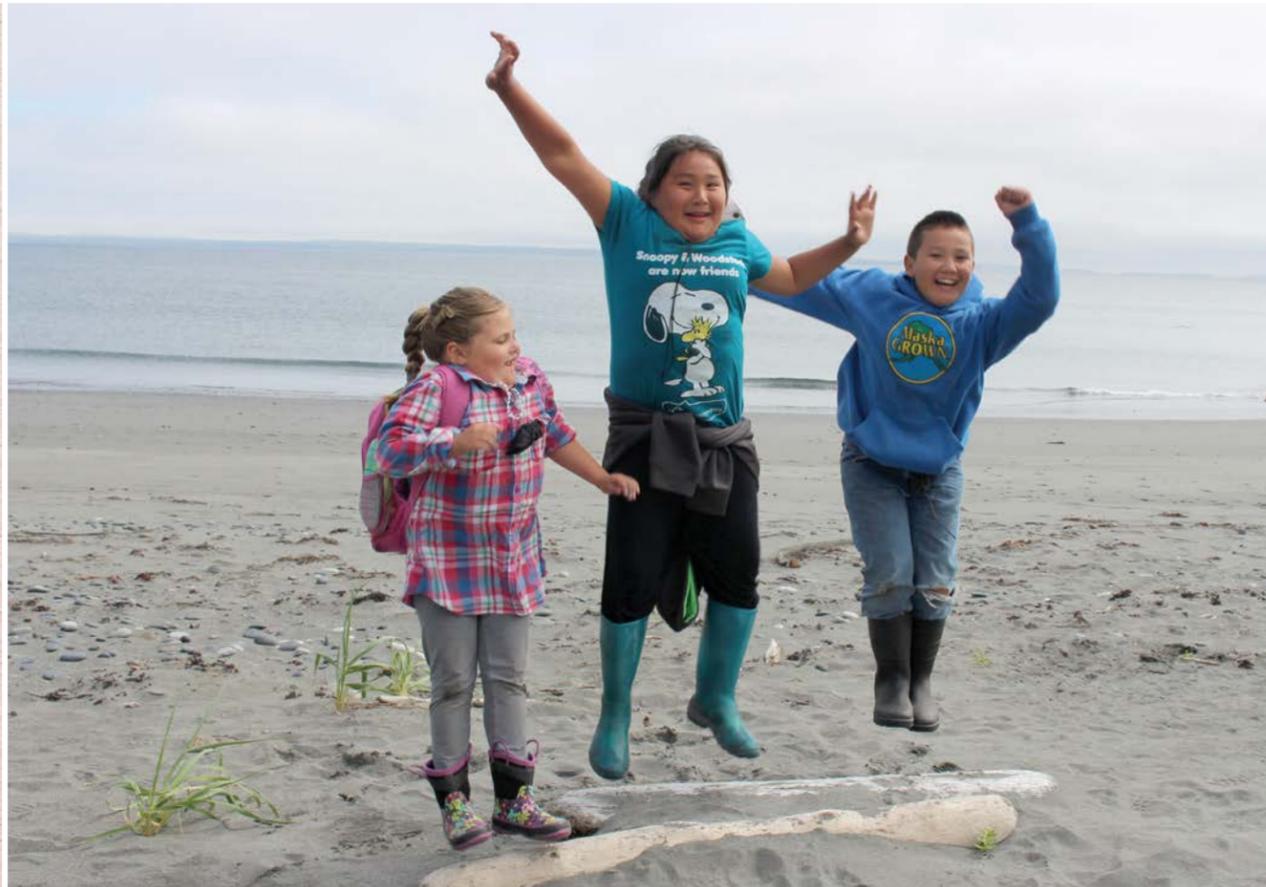
PREVENTION

Youth-targeted diabetes prevention activities



In this picture, a child shows off her "Wellness Shield."

Left: Children compete in games that demonstrate the connection between strong lungs and wellness



Nearly 1 in 4 U.S. teens has prediabetes or diabetes. In less than a decade, the proportion of kids ages 12 to 19 with diabetes or prediabetes has jumped from 9 percent in 1999–2000 to 23 percent in 2007–2008. Youth with prediabetes have a significantly increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Studies show the significant impact of modest weight loss and physical activity on the prevention or delay of type 2 diabetes. Education on diabetes risk and initiation of lifestyle change is the primary treatment for reducing risk of type 2 diabetes. Culturally relevant materials are needed to effectively educate Alaska Native youth on diabetes risk reduction while using evidence-based behavior change methods. SDPI funds have

been used by all 19 grantees in Alaska to develop programming aimed at empowering youth to live well and prevent diabetes.

Strong Kids

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium’s SDPI program developed Strong Kids, a curriculum aimed at promoting healthy behaviors among Alaska Native youth. In addition to nutrition and exercise, youth are taught to manage sleep, stress and stay tobacco free; all practices that prevent diabetes and support health resiliency. By partnering with CampFire Alaska, Strong Kids has become a statewide initiative. The program traveled to 31 communities during summer 2016.

The Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation SDPI program utilized the Strong Kids approach in its regional CampFire rural camps in an effort to reduce tobacco use among area youth, one of their diabetes program’s best practices. This is especially important in diabetes programs because tobacco use is associated with increased risk of diabetes complications, particularly amputation risk.

iKANAdoFit

#iKANAdoFit is a youth fitness program and collaboration between Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) SDPI Program, community health aides and the local school district. Physical activity and healthy eating are the focus for this diabetes prevention program in rural schools.

The program includes physical activity testing before and at the end of the program. Education helps participants set goals to improve or maintain their scores in an effort to create sustainable habits. This program provides youth with opportunities to engage in regular healthy activities, experience

the benefits of exercise, learn about how food fuels their body for activity, and receive the support and educational tools needed to achieve the most benefit.

Youth culture camps

Traditional Alaska Native foods and subsistence activities kept Alaska Native people essentially free of diabetes into the 1970s. Culture camps throughout Alaska teach Alaska Native youth these same traditional activities as a way of preventing diabetes and accessing a sustainable food supply for the next generation.

For example, the Ouzinkie Alutiiq Summer Challenge led by Community Health Aide, Genny Miller, is getting kids outdoors, teaching them to find and process subsistence foods while respecting self, Elders and community.

Similarly, the McCann Treatment Center built a Native food storage facility using Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation SDPI funds. The treatment center staff teaches troubled youth how to prepare and properly store traditional foods. The youth are able to take the subsistence food with them when they return to the village.

PREVENTION

Adult programming to support healthier diets and physical activity



"When I'm dipnetting for salmon, I feel my grandparents would be proud of me. I know eating our salmon instead of store-bought food is healthier."

Jennifer Brusehaber, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Left: Salmon strips hang in the Kenaitze Indian Tribe's smokehouse at the Tribe's waterfront fishery in Kenai. The Kenaitze SDPI program offers traditional gathering and harvesting activities throughout the spring, summer and fall.



"Gardens can be grown at 71 degrees north at near freezing temperatures in recycled coolers."
Angela Valdez, Arctic Slope Native Association

Education on diabetes risk and initiation of lifestyle change is the primary treatment for reducing risk of type 2 diabetes. Data from the Diabetes Prevention Program has shown a modest reduction (5-7 percent) of body weight and 150 minutes of physical activity per week can prevent or delay the development of diabetes. Healthy food choices, weight loss and physical activity are also the foundation of treatment for those who already have diabetes. SDPI funding in Alaska targets lifestyle changes in diet and exercise through culturally specific Alaska Native practices, skills and beliefs.

Healthy food choices and food access

SDPI classes in cooking, gardening and food preservation skills increase access to healthy food choices statewide.

The Dinner Makes a Difference healthy cooking classes at Southcentral Foundation have three primary goals: promotion of eating home cooked meals, skills for shopping on a budget and teaching kids healthy eating habits early.

The Berry Picking Challenge is an event sponsored by the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation SDPI program that promotes increased physical activity while enjoying traditional subsistence activities and healthy eating. The challenge is offered in all villages throughout the region. This fun contest encourages families to pick berries together while getting exercise and stocking up on healthy food for the upcoming year.

The Arctic Slope Native Association SDPI program in partnership with Iliisaġvik Cooperative Extension, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District, the City of Utqiagvik, and other partners, are out to prove that there are no barriers to producing food.

"We teach classes on how to prepare the locally grown foods in a healthy way. We have partnered with the Food Hub program to help provide local produce to our community and support for a sustainable food supply by utilizing our local farmers."

Amy Rattenbury, Seldovia Village Tribe

PREVENTION

Physical activity and managing weight



Weather and wildlife in Alaska can make physical activity outdoors challenging during certain times of the year. Many sites in Alaska utilize SDPI funding to ensure access to safe, warm places to be active. SDPI dollars provide access to fitness centers in five larger communities and open gym times in rural locales. Southcentral Foundation offers 22 exercise classes a week in their busy fitness facility for Alaska's largest Alaska Native population center—Anchorage.

Open gym times utilize already existing infrastructure of public school gyms.

"The Open Gym project has been ongoing for a number of years and is widely accepted by many villages throughout the region. The project is sponsored by BBAHC SDPI and allows children and adults of all ages to use the gym in their local community to exercise, play organized sports, or simply run around and play."

Cara Brown, Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation

"Since graduating from the advanced Diabetes Course, I've been encouraging people to exercise. We have a lot of new people coming to the gym. We are having a full gym at times! We even run out of machines!"

Community health aide, Maniilaq Association

Above top: The Maniilaq SDPI diabetes program purchased Nordic skis that community members can borrow to get active by taking advantage of the snowy tundra. Maniilaq SDPI partnered with NANANordic for this program. NANANordic's goal is to introduce the lifetime sport of cross-country skiing to rural Alaska. Data tells us 150 minutes of physical activity per week can delay the development of diabetes.

Above bottom: SDPI supports events such as walks, runs, yoga, tai chi, cross-country skiing and Zumba in every region of Alaska.

PREVENTION

Partnering for sustainability: community and organizational partnerships

"If you can find partners in your community who can reach their particular mission by working on the same project, then you have sustainability."

Angela Valdez, Arctic Slope Native Association



Unique partnerships are extending the impact of SDPI dollars by increasing access to healthy food choices, supporting safe environments for physical activity and broadening program audiences.

SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium partners with the fishing industry to bring traditional foods to Elders

SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) and a local Tribal government coordinated with a hatchery to provide salmon to community members. Some years more than 1,000 salmon were delivered by boat to households, providing food for winter. SEARHC SDPI staff also facilitated partnerships

between a fish processor, an air taxi service, and a senior center to transport healthy traditional foods, such as fish heads and herring eggs, to a village senior center at no charge.

Arctic Slope Native Association partners with city government to maintain walking paths

Tundra boardwalks provide a place for community members to walk. The Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA) Diabetes Program collaborates with the city of Utqiagvik (formerly known as Barrow), risk management and a citizen scientist to repair the city boardwalks. The diabetes program supervises the work, while the city and other agencies provide youth labor.



The ASNA SDPI lagoon walks are a collaborative between the regional diabetes program, the library and the local science community. Walking science lectures, literature and a weekly two-mile walk aimed at increasing activity in the community meet the interests of all partners.

Norton Sound Health Corporation partners with other Tribal organizations for community health

Norton Sound Health Corporation's SDPI program collaborates with agencies such as Nome Community Center and Nome Eskimo Community to coordinate Camp CRAVE cultural camp. CRAVE is an acronym for Culture, Recreation, Active, Values, Education. The cultural activities at Camp CRAVE increase children's knowledge of nutrition and physical movement.

Above top: Participants at Camp CRAVE cultural camp.

Tanana Chiefs Conference partners with their providers to support pregnant women and new mothers

By forming a partnership with Centering Pregnancy located at their regional Tribal hospital, Tanana Chiefs Conference SDPI program is able to provide early diabetes prevention education for pregnant women and new mothers.

Tribal organizations partner with providers to support breastfeeding

Breastfeeding helps decrease the risk of diabetes for both mothers and babies. Five SDPI programs worked with local hospital administration, providing

evidence-based information that led to implementation of medical protocols and policies to support breastfeeding. Alaska SDPI programs also provide breastfeeding education and community events to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

Many SDPI programs partner with community organizations to promote healthy lifestyle changes. Family Fun Day is an annual event in several areas using play to inspire healthy behavior practices.

Above top: SDPI community event supporting breastfeeding moms in the Norton Sound area.

Above bottom: Arctic Slope Native Association SDPI program encouraged youth to dance during Family Fun Day.



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SDPI provides a strong return of federal investment and is saving lives. Since the beginning of SDPI, blood sugar levels in American Indian and Alaska Native people have decreased, the risk of cardiovascular disease has been reduced, diabetes-related kidney disease progression has slowed, and primary prevention and weight management programs for Native children and youth have increased.

Congress must renew this critical program to ensure that the SDPI-funded programs can continue their important work and that lessons learned from these programs can be shared and replicated to keep Indian Country on the path to a diabetes-free future.

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Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Arctic Slope Native Association Limited
Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation
Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments
Ketchikan Indian Corporation
SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC)
Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association
Chugachmiut
Eastern Aleutian Tribes
Manilaq Association
Norton Sound Health Corporation
Copper River Native Association
Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Kodiak Area Native Association
Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium
Seldovia Village Tribe
Southcentral Foundation
Tanana Chiefs Conference
Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation



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<https://anthc.org/what-we-do/wellness/diabetes>