

American Indians and Alaska Natives and HIV/AIDS

In 1981, a new infectious disease, AIDS (or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome), was identified in the US. Several years later, the causative agent of AIDS—human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)—was discovered. This discovery coincided with the growing recognition that AIDS in the US was part of a global infectious disease pandemic.

Currently, HIV/AIDS has been reported in virtually every racial and ethnic population, every age group, and every socioeconomic group in every state and most large cities in the US. HIV/AIDS remains a significant cause of illness, disability, and death in the US, despite declines in 1996 and 1997. (US DHHS, 2000). In 2001, an estimated 29,723 AIDS cases were diagnosed among minority racial or ethnic groups, which accounted for more than 70% of all AIDS cases diagnosed that year in the US. (CDC, 2002).

“American Indians and Alaska Natives represent a unique population within the US, not only because of their oppression suffered in the development of this country but also because of their ongoing struggle to gain recognition in the HIV/AIDS epidemic. American Indians and Alaska Natives are not so unique, however, that they are protected from the same behaviors that put all people at risk for HIV infection.” (Rowell and Bouey, 2002).

- **Prevalence and Incidence**
- **Traditional Health Beliefs and Practices**
- **Risk Factors and Challenges**
- **Strengths and Protective Factors**
- **Diet**
- **Adherence Factors**
- **Service Interventions**
- **Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)**
- **References and Resources**

References and Resources

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