

Environmental Health Information Outreach to Native Americans

Office of Outreach and Special Populations ■ Specialized Information Services ■ National Library of Medicine ■ National Institutes of Health



Many tribes are responsible for environmental health services for their members and for the protection of tribal lands.

Tribes may need to regulate and provide for safe and healthy:

- Air quality
- Trash and hazardous waste disposal
- Drinking water quality
- Sewer, stormwater, and watershed management

Tribes aim to provide high-quality environmental health services, but may have challenges with:

- Lack of trained environmental health specialists from within their communities
- Inadequate funding
- Limited access to electronic information, including phones and Internet
- Geographic isolation
- Coordinating with environmental officials in federal, state, and local governments
- Little control over environmental problems that impact tribal lands but originate outside their boundaries
- Inadequate health care, especially emergency response
- Substandard housing and roads
- Pressure to use tribal lands to produce income from hazardous waste handling or from logging, mining, and other extraction industries

In some areas, tribes, like other local governments, may have to cope with:

- Pesticide use and pesticide drift
- Dust from unpaved roads, fields, and industrial operations
- Mold in homes, schools, and other buildings
- Air pollution
- Carbon monoxide poisoning caused by faulty home heating systems
- Abandoned mine tailings
- Unregulated dumps
- Dangerous and "dirty" businesses

Hands Around the World Image designed by Dennis Fox. Artist: Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation

National Library of Medicine (NLM) Outreach Activities

Training, exhibits, and career development for Native Americans

Training

Tribal colleges benefit from a 1-day training course for faculty, students, and community members. The course, *Empowering Tribal Communities with Environmental Health and Medical Information Resources*, has been offered at:

- Diné College Shiprock, New Mexico
- Haskell Indian Nations University Lawrence, Kansas
- Oglala Lakota College campuses at Pine Ridge and Kyle, South Dakota



Exhibits at Professional Meetings

NLM showcases its resources at several conferences each year including:

- National Tribal Environmental Council
- National Indian Health Board
- National Congress of American Indians
- Association of American Indian Physicians
- Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science



Indian Pow-Wow Exhibit Program

NLM exhibited at nine Indian pow-wows in eight states during the summer of 2005. NLM staff used online demonstrations and printed materials to introduce pow-wow visitors to health information resources for the public.



"Tox Kitties" and Real Kittens With Girls of the Blackfeet Tribe
North American Indian Days, Browning, Montana, July 7-10, 2005, with NLM/NIH staff at pow-wow exhibit tent.

Knowledge River

This work-study program provides support for American Indian and Hispanic American graduate students attending the University of Arizona School of Information Resources and Library Science in Tucson. Students learn about health sciences librarianship by working at the University of Arizona Health Sciences Library.

Sacred Root, an Information Internship Program

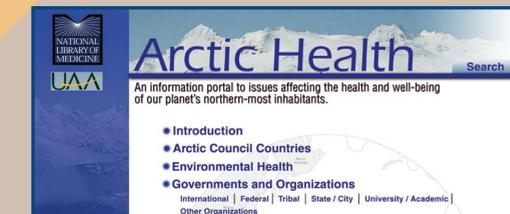
This program is for midcareer Native Americans involved in health or information technology. It offers professional development along with funding for projects designed by the interns to enhance health information access in their communities. Interns have participated from:

- Three Affiliated Tribes Ft. Berthold, North Dakota
- Nez Perce Tribe Lapwai, Idaho
- Native Hawaiian community Honolulu, Hawaii



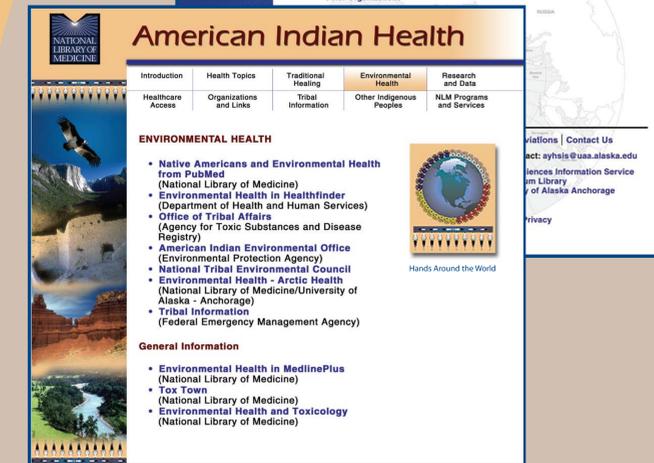
Web Resources

Access to quality health information may help prevent illnesses and injuries

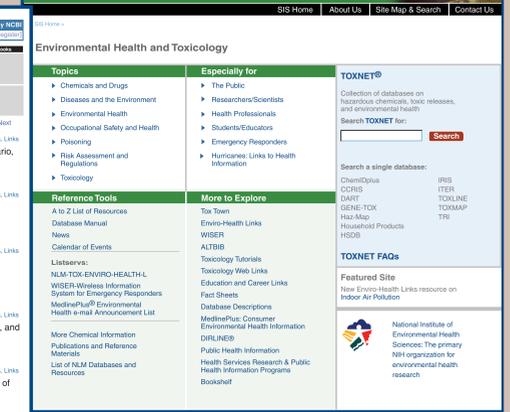


Health Information For and About American Indians

- Arctic Health
Health portal for Arctic region inhabitants, with a focus on Alaska
<http://arctichealth.org>
- American Indian Health
Gateway to health information for and about American Indians
<http://americanindianhealth.nlm.nih.gov>
- Tribal Connections (National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Pacific Northwest Region)
Network Libraries are the best source for regional assistance with health information and medical libraries
<http://tribalconnections.org>

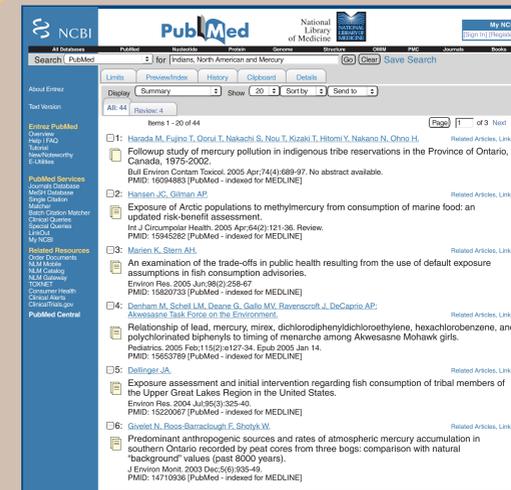


Environmental Health and Toxicology SIS



For Tribal Environmental Health Workers and Tribal Employees

- Environmental Health and Toxicology home page
<http://tox.nlm.nih.gov>
- PubMed/MEDLINE
Index to medical journal articles
<http://pubmed.gov>
- Haz-Map
Hazards and diseases linked to mining, steelwork, farming, oil industries, and many others.
<http://hazmap.nlm.nih.gov>



Tox Town



Helping Concerned Citizens Learn About Their Health and the Environment

- Tox Town
Exploring connections between health and the environment
<http://toxstown.nlm.nih.gov>
- MedlinePlus
Trusted Health Information for You
Over 700 health topics including Native American Health
<http://medlineplus.gov/>