

# National Indian Health Board



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## Living a Balanced Life with Diabetes

### The National Diabetes Education Program Urges Health Care Professionals to Promote Better Diabetes Self-care in Tribal Communities

The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) has created a new tool kit to help health care professionals reach out to their American Indian and Alaska Native patients with information to promote better diabetes self-care. The *Living a Balanced Life with Diabetes* tool kit features culturally appropriate resources to address the barriers to diabetes self-management that are pervasive in tribal communities.

At nearly 16.1%, American Indians and Alaska Natives have the highest age-adjusted prevalence of diabetes among all U.S. racial and ethnic groups.<sup>1</sup> The diabetes death rate among American Indians and Alaska Natives is nearly three times the rate for the general U.S. population.<sup>2</sup> The high prevalence of diabetes among American Indians and Alaska Natives makes the *Living a Balanced Life with Diabetes* tool kit a valuable new resource for health care professionals who serve these populations.

Self-care of diabetes can prevent or delay the disease's complications in any population. However, challenges such as substance use, depression, and the stigma associated with mental health issues can make good self-care difficult. Many tribal communities face these challenges. It is important to help people with diabetes address mental health issues to reduce the risk of many avoidable diabetes complications.

The *Living a Balanced Life with Diabetes* tool kit contains a variety of materials to address these issues, including the following:

- Barbara Mora's *using Our Wit and Wisdom to Live Well With Diabetes* audio CD and book, which describes her journey with diabetes.
- *Indian Health Diabetes Best Practice: Depression Care* booklet on how to screen for and treat depression and when to refer patients to mental health specialists.
- *Health for Native Life* magazine articles covering stressors such as anger and grief.
- Depression screening tools, including a patient health questionnaire and a depression checklist.
- Tip sheets on alcohol and smoking, self-esteem, and healthy food choices.
- Suicide Prevention Hotline magnet with contact information.
- Resource list with information on diabetes control, suicide prevention, nutrition, physical activity, and telephone hotlines.

We encourage you to distribute these materials to health care professionals in your communities who serve American Indians and Alaska Natives. Order free tool kits at [www.yourdiabetesinfo.org](http://www.yourdiabetesinfo.org) or 1-888-693-NDEP (6337). If you have any questions on how to promote the tool kit, please contact NDEP at [aianpt@cdc.gov](mailto:aianpt@cdc.gov).

The NDEP is jointly sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health, with the support of more than 200 partners.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Number of Americans with diabetes rises to nearly 26 million [press release]. Atlanta; 2011 January 26. Available from URL:

[http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2011/p0126\\_diabetes.html?s\\_cid=2011\\_p0126\\_diabetes](http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2011/p0126_diabetes.html?s_cid=2011_p0126_diabetes).

<sup>2</sup> Indian Health Service. Trends in Indian health: 2002–2003 edition [brochure]. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2009 October. Available from URL: [http://www.ihs.gov/nonmedicalprograms/ihs\\_stats/files/Trends\\_02-03\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.ihs.gov/nonmedicalprograms/ihs_stats/files/Trends_02-03_Brochure.pdf).