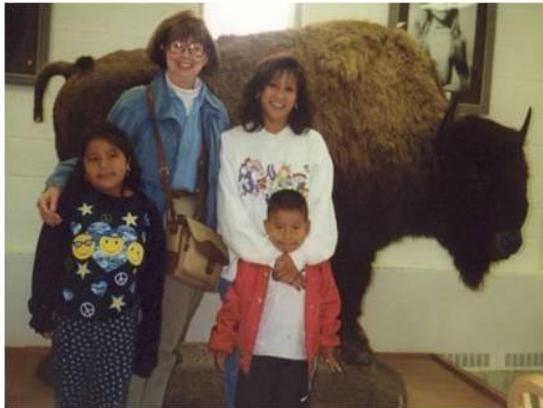


A Successful Collaborative Effort: The Coming of the Blessing® - How far we have come

Presented by:
Denise Aragon &
Dr. Carol Arnold



Denise and Carol



American Indian and
Alaska Native Women's
Committee, Oct. 2014
Dallas, Tx



A Successful Collaboration



- Between American Indian/Alaska Natives and the March of Dimes



The March of Dimes

To improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality.



Fund Research
to understand the problem and discover answers.



Help Moms
have full-term pregnancies and healthy babies.



Support Families
comforting them when their baby needs help to survive and thrive.

Working Together

Volunteers, donors, researchers, educators, outreach workers and advocates work together to support the mission.



A Successful Collaboration



Shoshone/Arapaho Prenatal Education Project with March of Dimes, Early Head Start, & volunteer faculty

- Began in 1998
- Teaching in the traditional way from mother, aunts, grandmothers



Evaluation in 2006



Qualitative evaluation Served more than 400

- Education
- Support
- Access
- Empowerment

Waiting List

Needs

- Culturally appropriate prenatal information



Arnold, C. (2006).Pregnancy Workshop and Shoshone and Arapaho Tribes

Nationwide Survey by Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma



Reviewed **510** maternal-child pamphlets used by health care professionals

Only **48** or **9.4%** of pamphlets were culturally appropriate for American Indian or Alaska Native families

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Sohail Khan, Director of Health Research, Cherokee Nation Health Service

A Commitment to Action



March of Dimes - West Region American Indian/Alaska Native Women's Committee

Summer of 2006

AI/AN women volunteering to review prenatal education needs

- 13 different Nations/Tribes
- A common goal

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The Challenge to the Committee.....



- American Indian and Alaska Natives - Culturally Diverse
- Over 5 million
- 566 Federally recognized tribes
- 300 Reservations
- Over 300 languages



U.S. Census Bureau (2012); U.S. Department of Health and Human Service OMH(2012)



Health Challenges.....

- Highest rate of late/no prenatal care
- Highest rate of inadequate prenatal care
- Barriers:
 - Access to care
 - Poverty
 - Family Violence
 - Fear of healthcare system
 - Transportation
 - Belief system may clash with Western beliefs
 - Perceived and real cultural insensitivity by providers



U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, IHS (2015); March of Dimes Peristats, 2015



Health Challenges

- Higher rates for diabetes, obesity, hypertension, alcohol, violence, unintended injuries.
- 29% uninsured
- IHS reaches approximately 2 million
 - Limited access if not on reservation.
- Infant Mortality
 - Second highest rate in the U.S. - 8.2 /1000
- Prematurity
 - Second highest rate in the U.S. - 14.1%



U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, IHS (2015); March of Dimes Peristats (2015)



Strengths of the community Family Values/Spirituality-



- Strong family connections
- Extended family considered immediate family.
- Spiritual and may blend traditional with Christian beliefs



Strengths of the Community Common Health Beliefs



- Health is balance between physical, emotional and spiritual self in relationship to world
- Mind, body and spirit are part of healing.
- May use traditional healing: Sweat lodge, talking circles, songs, prayers, herbs, sacred grasses

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The Importance



- The health of the baby during pregnancy depends upon on the health of the Mother and what she does or does not do during her pregnancy
- One of the most important things a woman can do is to get early and regular prenatal care and take good care of herself

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How the Committee Worked



- Reviewed available AI/AN prenatal literature

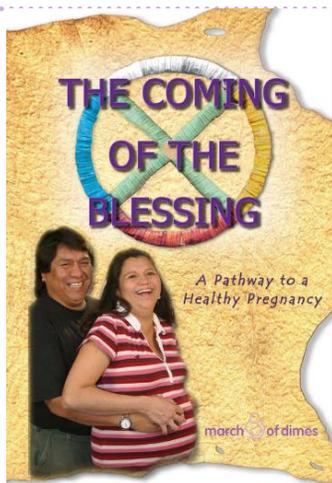
- Conducted focus groups
 - Providers and clients
 - Community

- **THE NEED**

One comprehensive booklet on prenatal care targeting the American Indian and Alaska Native families



The Coming of the Blessing®



Based on the core values common to all AI/AN Nations

- Love of family
- Honor of mother and child
- Sacred time of pregnancy
- Importance of the father and family
- Spirituality



The Coming of the Blessing®



Knowledge for a healthy pregnancy using the circle of life

Value the traditional pathway of teaching by mothers, grandmothers

Traditional and ancestral wisdom



The Coming of the Blessing®

•A Positive and Supportive Message

- Preconception Care
- Trimesters of Pregnancy
- Risks to Pregnancy



Distribution for Pilot Year 2008

Pilot printing of 7,500

- Selected reservations and Pueblos across the Western US and Alaska
- Given by a provider with discussion
- Evaluation from the Moms/readers
 - incentives



Evaluation Results - Making a Difference!!!!

Women from 44 different Nations and 10 states

88% between 18-35

13 preterm births with 1 twin birth

- Preterm birth rate of 7.5% vs. 14.1% for AI/AN infants



Evaluation Results



Message from the committee

- 12 Non AI/AN women did respond
- They did not like the booklet
- **May demonstrate the importance of cultural relevance in patient education materials**



Evaluation Results - Making a Difference



Behavior changes - **90%**

- Changed eating habits
- Reduced stress
- Started to Exercise
- Decided to breastfeed

Stopped or reduced smoking or taking drugs



Evaluation Results - Making a Difference.....



88% kept all of their prenatal appointments

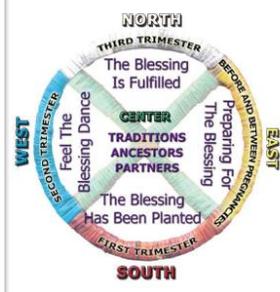
88% believed the ancestral wisdom was helpful

78% believed that the traditional beliefs were helpful



Evaluation Results - Making a Difference.....

THE MEDICINE WHEEL



What the Women Wrote

- Helpful information for my life
- Values my traditional heritage
- Makes me proud to be a part of my culture
- Helped me stay true to our beliefs



Evaluation Results - Making a Difference

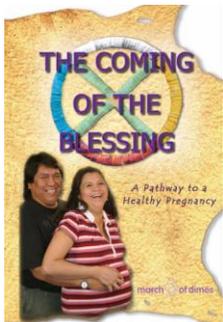


What the Women Wrote

- Lets you know about our ancestors
- Family is most of all important for supporting each other
- Great information by Natives for Natives
- It talks to you
- THANK YOU



Award Winning Committee/ Initiative



2009

National Perinatal Association-
Transcultural Award

2010

National Indian Health Board-
Regional Impact Award

2011

APHA - Effective Practice MCH
Award



IHS Promising Practice



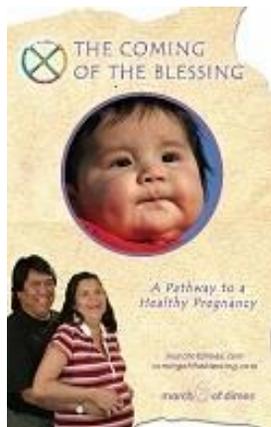
2010

The Coming of the Blessing was designated as a “Promising Practice” by Indian Health Service.

Results of a 2nd evaluation could upgrade the initiative to “evidence-based”.



We have a second edition...and



- **Our second edition came out in 2013**
 - More inclusive of all the Western Nations
- **Our third edition will come out this year**
 - To include the Eastern Nations as well



Posters, Table Top Exhibit and Photo Stories

HAVING A BABY?
It is best to . . .

- PREPARE** your mind, your body and your spirit.
- CHOOSE** to abstain from alcohol, tobacco and drugs.
- PURIFY** with traditional, healthy foods and vitamins.
- SELK** prenatal care early and often.
- AIM** for a full-term pregnancy of 9 months (about 40 weeks).
- KNOW** the signs of labor and what to do.
- FIND** wellness through your circle of support.

Ask us about The Coming of the Blessing prenatal education!

THE COMING OF THE BLESSING
Collecting Native American the gift of knowledge and the power of prayer to help us live for ourselves and our children.

In many Native cultures, the child of life is represented by a perfect circle and a Native Blessing.

The circle of life means that a child, with no beginning and no ending.

The greatest gift of all is to be born in all honor. Blessings are in prayer. Blessings are in life.

Becoming a parent is a blessed event. It requires a prayer, a blessing, a blessing, a blessing and a blessing.

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Coming of the Blessing website

The Coming of the Blessing | Mission | March of Dimes - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.marchofdimes.com/localprogram_blessing.html

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Home > Mission > Local Programs

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working together for stronger, healthier babies

select a category Search GO NEWS: 1 BIRTHS MONITOR TO FIND USE IN LOWER RISK WOMEN...
Luzmar Gonzalez, Heather Baker, and Ma...

Local Programs

- ✓ We work to improve the health of babies across the country.
- ✓ Programs are aimed at supporting moms-to-be and professionals.
- ✓ We offer comfort and support to families with a baby in the NICU.

More on this topic

Related topics

- Global programs
- Prematurity campaigns
- Prevention activities
- Access to health coverage

Home Q&A **The Coming of the Blessing** share | email | print | save | vote

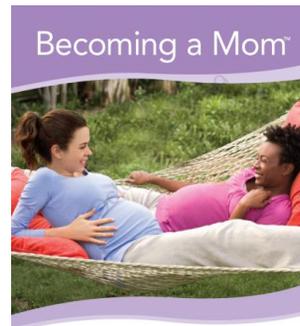
The Coming of the Blessing

A March of Dimes initiative called The Coming of the Blessing is addressing high rates of infant death and premature birth among American Indian and Alaska Native babies. The initiative was created by the March of Dimes American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Women's Committee. This group of women, representing 10 different tribes, developed health education materials that embrace the cultural and spiritual beliefs related to pregnancy and childbirth. Award

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Prenatal Education

- Uses March of Dimes curriculum *Becoming a Mom*
- Includes appendix to guide facilitators in adapting content for American Indian/Alaska Native audience.



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pregnancy & newborn
health education center™
marchofdimes.com



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Facilitator Trainings



- Alaska
- Arizona
- Montana
- Nebraska
- New Mexico
- Nevada
- New York
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- South Dakota
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming

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Most Remote - Alaska



St. Paul Island by
Leatha
Mercurieff



The Initiative

The Coming of the Blessing is....

- an umbrella for any activity implemented by March of Dimes specifically for American Indian/Alaska Native families.
- Including
 - Facilitator trainings
 - Prenatal classes
 - Support for families with NICU babies



 Traveling AI/AN photo exhibit

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Our Donors

- The Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma
- The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Forest County Potawatomi Foundation
- Kodiak Area Native Association



Our Tribal Partners - Prenatal Education and Evaluation

- Colorado River Indian Tribe
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe
- Santee Tribe/Nebraska
- Omaha Tribe
- Ponca Tribe
- Custer Health North Dakota
- Seminole Nation
- St. Croix Tribal Health
- Sakogan Chippewa Health Center
- Red Cliff Community Health Center
- Menominee Tribal Clinic
- Stockbridge-Munsee Health & Wellness Center
- Bad River Health Services
- Peter Christensen Health Services Lac du Flambeau
- Shoshone and Arapaho Tribes, Wyoming



2nd Evaluation

- Participant Satisfaction
- Facilitator Satisfaction
- Participant Demographics
- Knowledge Change
- Behavior Change
- Birth Outcomes



Success of Collaborative Efforts



- Matching Mission and Need
- Building trust*
 - Takes work on all sides
- Empowerment*
 - “I never knew I had a voice before”
- Commitment



How the program works on Wind River Indian Reservation



What works

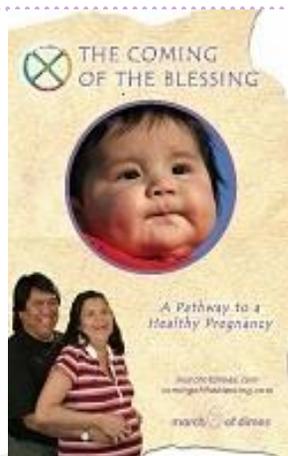


Some of the challenges



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What can you do?



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Can you imagine the day when
every baby is born healthy?



We can.



The End

Thank you
for
Attending!



You can reach us

- Denise Aragon at sahstar@tribcsp.com
- Carol Arnold at carnold@twu.edu
- March of Dimes at marchofdimes.com



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Photos: *Coming of the Blessing*®; Dr. Carol Arnold, and Google images American Indian/Alaska Native women

