

Coronary Heart Disease: A Burden for American Indians and Alaska Natives



Heart disease and cancer are the leading causes of death for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN). A variety of health disparities affect AI/AN communities, including, disproportionately high prevalence for diabetes, suicide, teenage pregnancy, infant death, unintentional and motor vehicle injuries, chronic liver disease, cirrhosis, and coronary heart disease.

American Indians/Alaska Natives have the highest prevalence of coronary heart disease, affecting 11.6 percent of their population.

The number of Americans who report they have coronary heart disease – which includes heart attack and angina (chest pain) – continues to decline but rates vary widely from state to state and by race and ethnicity. The highest rates of self-reported coronary heart disease are among older adults aged 65 and over (19.8 percent) and American Indians/Alaskan Natives (11.6 percent).

Million Hearts is a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes over the next five years. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) are the co-leaders of Million Hearts within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, working alongside other federal agencies including the National

Institutes of Health, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the Food and Drug Administration. Key private-sector partners include the American Heart Association and the YMCA, among others.

Million Hearts seeks to improve clinical care by helping patients learn and follow their ABCS:

- Aspirin for people at risk
- Blood pressure control
- Cholesterol management
- Smoking cessation

Fewer than half of Americans who should be taking an aspirin a day are taking one and fewer than half of Americans with high blood pressure have it under control. Only 1 in 3 Americans with high cholesterol is effectively treated, and less than a quarter of Americans who smoke get help to quit when they see their doctor.

“We’re all at risk for heart disease and stroke,” said Jing Fang, M.D., epidemiologist with CDC’s Division of Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention. “People of all ages, genders, races, and ethnicities are affected. However, certain groups, including American Indians/Alaskan Natives, African Americans and older adults, are at higher risk than others.”

CDC and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) work with Tribal Governments, Tribal Organizations, Urban Indian Health Centers, IHS, and others to establish and increase collaborations to strengthen infrastructure and capacity. The CDC/ATSDR Tribal Consultation Policy provides agency guidance for working effectively with AI/AN Communities and Organizations, as well as enhancing AI/AN access to programs. The CDC/ATSDR Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC) meets to exchange information about public health issues in Indian Country, identify urgent public health needs in AI/AN communities and to discuss collaborative approaches to addressing these issues and needs.

The MMWR report on state coronary heart disease prevalence is available at http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6040a1.htm?s_cid=mm6040a1_w

Minority Health Observances <http://www.cdc.gov/minorityhealth/observances.html#AI/AN>

For more information about Million Hearts visit <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/about-mh.shtml>

For more information about heart disease and stroke, visit www.cdc.gov/dhdsp