



Indian Health Service Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Collaborative Effort Provides Health Information to Indian Children

The Indian Health Service's (IHS) Diabetes Treatment and Prevention Program and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Native Diabetes Wellness Program, in conjunction with the national "First Book" organization, will officially begin national distribution of the Eagle Book series for American Indian and Alaska Native children. The book series provides culturally based information on health promotion topics, including diabetes prevention, physical activity, nutrition, and healthy eating. The IHS and CDC, two federal agencies in the Department of Health and Human Services, provided the health information contained in these books.

The First Book is a national nonprofit organization whose main mission is to provide low-income children the opportunity to read and own their first new books. The Eagle Book series is designed to appeal to American Indian and Alaska Native children in kindergarten through the 4th grade. First Book is using its nationwide distribution system to place the Eagle Books with organizations that are serving American Indian and Alaska Native children. Two hundred thousand books have been printed and will be distributed at three sites: Albuquerque, NM; Seattle, WA; and Minneapolis, MN. Registered nonprofit organizations, government entities, and Title I schools can obtain books (free except for shipping charges) at www.NationalBookBank.org (1-866-393-1222) in late February and in March.

"American Indians and Alaska Natives suffer a disproportionately high rate of diabetes compared with other populations worldwide. This collaboration by the IHS, CDC, and First Book will aid the effort to reduce diabetes and other related health issues among Indian children," stated Dr. Charles Grim, IHS Director. "Efforts such as the Eagle Book series project will continue to build upon successful work through partnerships and provide vital health information to Indian people."

The Eagle Books are a series of four books that are brought to life by wise animal characters who engage their young friends in the joy of physical activity, eating healthy foods, and learning from their elders about health and diabetes prevention. The stories encourage children to find fun ways to be physically active and make healthy eating choices. The first book, *Through the Eyes of the Eagle*, introduces the characters of Mr. Eagle and Rain That Dances, the American Indian boy he befriends. Mr. Eagle reminds the young boy of the healthy ways of his ancestors.

The first phase of distribution will begin in Albuquerque, NM, on February 23-24, 2006. As part of the kick-off, there will be a press conference held at 10 a.m. (MST) at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, on February 23, 2006. Invited guests include Mrs. Barbara Richardson, First Lady of New Mexico, who is a major supporter of children's health and wellness. Other press conference participants include Lorraine Valdez, Deputy Director of the IHS National Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention; Dr. Frank Vinicor, Associate Director for Public Health Practice, CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; Wendy Bhagat, Executive Director for the First Book National Book Bank; and Buford Rolin, Chair for the Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee. American Indian tribal council leaders, Tribal Council Diabetes Committee members, Indian school-aged children, and local public health officials are also expected to attend the press event.

More information about the Eagle Book series is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/eagle.htm>.



NOTICE TO EDITORS: For additional information on this subject, contact the IHS Public Affairs Office at 301-443-3593. Additional information about the IHS is available on the IHS website at <http://www.ihs.gov> and <http://info.ihs.gov>

