



Urban American Indian Tobacco Prevention & Education Network

UAITPEN Newsletter

December 2007

Indian college goes tobacco free and other news

As of January 2008, Oglala Lakota College will be 100% tobacco free at all sites, including the Piya Wiconi Administrative Headquarters. The tobacco ban includes spit tobacco, but does allow the use of traditional tobacco on campus. The Board of Trustees "wanted to send a message to our students, staff, and reservation citizens of its great concern that tobacco use causes major health problems with Indian people," college president Thomas Shortbull said in a news release. The college has received grant money from Dakota State to provide tobacco cessation workshops for students (and hopefully staff).



As of October 2007, the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana is smokefree. The

"Ohinni Candi Wakandapi" Act, Chanis Wakan K/nusa, or Keep Tobacco Sacred Act went into effect October 1st, 2007, protecting tribal members within the boundaries of Ft. Peck Reservation from the effects of secondhand smoke from commercial tobacco products. It applies to all enclosed public places on the reservation, including tribally owned casinos and bingo halls. This act was dedicated to all the Assiniboine and Sioux members who have died and/or who suffer from commercial tobacco related cancers and diseases.



The City of Portland has banned smoking within 50 feet of all city owned buildings where city employees work. The ban was passed unanimously by the city council.

Policies that ban smoking in public places do good for the heart. In New York State, after their statewide ban on tobacco use in public places, heart attack rates decreased by 8%, according to the state's department of health. In Pueblo, Colorado, 18 months after a city ban on tobacco use in public places, heart attacks were down by 27%, and in Helena, Montana, six weeks after their ban, heart attacks were down by 40%. Although we can not assume that the only factor that affected heart attack rates is exposure to secondhand smoke, I think we can safely assume that reducing exposure to secondhand smoke is good for our health.



Please note: Our next UAITPEN Quarterly Meeting will be held on Thursday, Jan. 17, at Wild Oats on NE 15th & Freemont.

Tobacco related disparities

The tobacco prevention program at NARA is funded by a grant through the state of Oregon's Tobacco Prevention & Education Program. The intent of the grant is to address tobacco related health disparities. The idea is that by doing community based prevention work, we can reduce the tobacco related disparities that American Indians face. For example, American Indians are almost twice as likely to be current tobacco users (38% compared to 19% general population), and are more likely to die from tobacco related

disease (2 of every 5 AI/AN). By working directly in the community through the UAITPEN, those numbers will optimally be reduced. Another area of disparity is around substance abuse and mental health, Between 75-90% of people in treatment for substance abuse are current tobacco users, and the leading cause of death for patients previously treated for alcoholism and/or other drug dependence. Clearly, there is a disparity in this population as well. Because NARA does provide

addiction treatment services, I have been doing a lot of research around this topic, and am pleased to announce we will be holding a mini-conference on tobacco dependence in addictions treatment on May 6th, 2008 at the Native American Student and Community Center. This will really be a chance for all the many individuals and organizations who are tackling this very difficult issue to start a dialogue about what is already happening, and find ways to collaborate on future goals.



Traditional tobacco story

The Beginning of the World: A Yauelmani Yokut Legend

At first there was water everywhere. A piece of wood grew up out of the water to the sky. On the tree there was a nest. Those who were inside did not see any earth. There was only water to be seen. The eagle was the chief of them. With him were the wolf, Coyote, the panther, the prairie falcon, the hawk called po'yon, and the condor.

The eagle wanted to make the earth. He thought: "We will have to have land." Then he called k'uik'ui, a small duck. He said to it: "Dive down and bring up earth." The duck dived, but did not reach the bottom. It died. The eagle called another kind of duck. He told it to dive. This duck went far down. It finally reached the bottom. Just as it touched the mud there it died. Then it came up again. Then the eagle and the other six saw a little dirt under its finger nail.

When the eagle saw this he took the dirt from its nail. He mixed it with telis and pele seeds and ground them up. He put water with the mixture and made dough. This was in the morning. Then he set it in the water and it swelled and spread everywhere, going out from the middle. In the evening the eagle told his companions: "Take some earth."

They went down and took a little earth up in the tree with them. Early in the morning, when the morning star came, the eagle said to the wolf: "Shout." The wolf shouted and the earth disappeared, and all was water again.

The eagle said: "We will make it again," for it was for this purpose that they had taken some earth with them into the nest. Then they took telis and pele seeds again, and ground them with the earth, and put the mixture into the water, and it swelled out again.

Then early next morning, when the morning star appeared, the eagle told the wolf again: "Shout!" and he shouted three times. The earth was shaken by an earthquake, but it stood. Then Coyote said: "I must shout too." He shouted and the earth shook a very little. Now it was good.

Then they came out of the tree on the ground. Close to where this tree stood there was a lake. The eagle said: "We will live here." Then they had a house there and lived there.

Now every evening when the sun went down tokho came there and went into the water in the lake. Coyote wanted to catch it. The eagle asked him: "How will you do it?" Coyote said: "Well, I will do it."

He went off into the brush, rolled string on his thigh, and made it into a snare, which he put into the water. Tokho came, entered the water, and was caught. Coyote tried to take hold of it, but it was too hot. He could not touch it. It

was like fire. Only after the sun came up was he able to take hold of it.

Now, after he had held it all night, the tokho said to him: "Take me to the house."

Coyote asked it: "What does tokho mean?" It said: "I am tobacco. Give me to the prairie falcon."

Coyote brought it to the house and said: "Who wants this?" The eagle did not want it. None of the seven wanted it except the prairie falcon. He said: "I will take it."

Coyote asked it: "What are you good for?"

The tobacco said: "I am good for many things. If there is anything you want to have, use me, and then whatever it is that you wish will be so."

The prairie falcon said: "I will try it." At night he took a little of the tobacco in his mouth and blew out: "Pu! I want it to rain." Then it began to rain. It rained all night.

Then Coyote said: "We will make a woman of a deer." Then they killed a deer. They put it under a blanket of tules. It was entirely covered. When the morning star came it got up. It was a person now. It was a woman. Coyote said: "I will sleep with her."

That night he slept with her. In the morning he was dead. The woman was not hurt. The prairie falcon took a sharp water-grass. He said: "Stick it in his backside and he will get up."

One of them put it in. Coyote got up hurriedly. "Ah, I was sleepy," he said. He said: "That is not good. It is not sweet. All men will die. We shall have to do it differently." Then he killed her.

He left her under the blanket over night. Then he said: "Tonight I will try it again." Then he slept with her. In the morning he got up early. "This is all right," he said. "This is good. We will let it be like that."

This is how people came to be: deer was the mother. They made her by means of tobacco, blowing [spitting] it out while they said what they wished. But the prairie falcon ate nothing but tobacco. He lived on that. Thus the earth was made.



Upcoming Events:

January 9, 2008: UAITPEN Ceremonial Plant Project Meeting, 12-1, NASCC at Portland State University. For info contact Becky, 503-230-9875 x273.

January 17, 2008: Quarterly Urban American Indian Tobacco Prevention & Education Meeting, Wild Oats 2nd floor Studio A (past Spa), NE 15th & Freemont, 11:30-1:30. For info contact Becky 503-230-9875 x273.

January 19, 2008: Wicipi, the 9th annual Portland Community College Traditional Winter Powwow. HT Building PCC Sylvania, 12000 SW 49th Ave. Grand Entry 1 & 7, mural art demonstration and exhibit from 10 a.m. to noon, silent auction 4-8. For info call PCC Multicultural Center at 503-977-4112.

February 27-March 1, 2008: Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco 14th Annual Meeting, Portland Hilton. <http://www.srnt.org/meeting/2008/index.html>

March 26-28, 2008: ACCESS 2008: Building a Tobacco Free Future, Seattle, WA. <http://www.accessconference.org/>

April 12, 2008: UAITPEN Ceremonial Plant Project kick-off event, 2-6pm, NASCC at Portland State University. Come learn about ceremonial plants traditionally used by Native American tribes, and get your own cutting of Kinnikinnick and learn how to grow it yourself. For more info, contact Becky 503-230-9875 x273.



Kinnikinnick is the original name for a plant called Bearberry. Native Americans used this herb alone or mixed with tobacco and other herbs. It was used as a smudge or smoked in a sacred pipe, carrying the smoker's prayers to the Great Spirit.

Community tobacco gardens

A growing trend in Indian country tobacco prevention is the development of traditional tobacco gardens. Because many tribes have traditional and ceremonial ties to plants that have (through translation) been called tobacco, commercial tobacco products have often been used interchangeably with those ceremonial plants.

As a way to reduce Indian communities dependence on commercial tobacco, programs are creating community ceremonial gardens. For some tribes, that does mean growing their own tobacco plants. But for other tribes, that can mean exploring the plants that have been traditionally used ceremonially, and then growing that plant. One plant used ceremonially in the Northwest that is at times called tobacco or Indian tobacco is called "kinnikinnick" or bearberry.

The Urban American Indian Tobacco Prevention and Education Network decided during their October Quarterly meeting that one of their projects would be a ceremonial plant garden initiative. The first meeting for this project was held on December 5, and it was decided that the first phase of this project was more about discovering what resources are already available and informing the community, rather than developing entirely new community gardens for these plants. One resource that exists is the rooftop garden at the Native Student and Community Center (NASCC) at Portland State University. There are many plants traditionally used by Northwestern Tribes in the garden, including kinnikinnick, sage, wild rose, and more.

Join us on April 12, 2008, at the NASCC at 2pm to find out more about this great initiative, and get your own cutting of kinnikinnick and instructions for growing it yourself.





**NATIVE AMERICAN
REHABILITATION
ASSOCIATION
(NARA) OF THE
NORTHWEST, INC.**

Becky Wright, MPH
Tobacco Prevention & Education
Program Coordinator
15 N. Morris St.
Portland OR 97227

Phone: 503-230-9875 x 273
Fax: 503-230-9877
Email: bwright@naranorthwest.org
www.naranorthwest.org/tobacco



Program update

There are two main projects that I am working on at the end of 2007. One is a comprehensive tobacco policy for NARA. The policy encompasses integration of tobacco dependence treatment into our residential and outpatient chemical dependency services, as well as at our clinic. The policy also prohibits tobacco use by employees, visitors or clients/patients within 25 feet of all facilities. We've had to take many things into consideration while crafting this policy. Originally, we thought that a 100% tobacco free policy would be the direction we wanted to go. But after examining the incredible disparities that people in substance abuse are facing with tobacco use (as many as 90% are smokers!) we realized that the integration of tobacco cessation into treatment

protocols was much more important for our clients than requiring them not to smoke while at our residential facility. So although we will request that employees, visitors, patients and outpatient clients at do not use tobacco products on NARA property, we will allow an exception for our residential clients. Ultimately, the person needs to want to quit smoking (like other addictions), so we can't force it and we don't want it to be a reason not to see treatment for other addictions. The policy is currently going through the approval process with NARA's Executive Director and the Management Team, and will hopefully be presented to the NARA Board of Directors early in the new year.

The second project I've been involved with is the ceremonial gardens. You can read more about it on page 3 of this

newsletter, but basically a group of us have decided to work on creating ceremonial plants accessible to community members in order to facilitate a shift in the acceptance of the use of commercial tobacco products in ceremony back to the original plants that would have been used traditionally. It is a community garden project, but also an educational project designed to help urban Indians reconnect with culture as a way of prevention. I am very excited about this project, and the energy that has been brought by participants has been phenomenal! If you would like to be a part of this project, please let us know.

Here's to the New Year! May you all be blessed with good health and happiness!

~Becky

