The only thing is…
we are here for love.
~ Community Health Aide/Practitioner

We don’t talk about cancer and we don’t talk about our bodies. It’s hard to find the right words. Sometimes we are embarrassed to talk about our body parts. Being embarrassed can be a matter of life or death. My Dad died of colon cancer. We need to talk about various health topics with family members and to educate one another. ~ Community Health Worker

Together, let’s talk about ways to live well along our life journey. We hope the resources in this newsletter will help you to support the people in your community to understand ways they can prevent cancer, decrease their cancer risk, and if they are diagnosed with cancer, to live well along their cancer journey.

As a Behavioral Health Aide (BHA), Community Health Aide and Community Health Practitioner (CHA/P), or a Community Health Representative (CHR), the knowledge and understanding you share with people can make a difference in the story of cancer in your community. Working together, we can prevent and decrease the incidence and mortality of cancer among Alaska Native and American Indian people.

Thank you for your willingness to share your wisdom and to learn more about cancer.

This newsletter shares cancer education materials developed with and for Alaska’s CHA/Ps, BHAs, CHRs, and the people in their communities.
**What’s the Big Deal? movie**

*What’s the Big Deal?* a 25-minute ‘telenovela’ style movie focuses on the importance of colorectal cancer (CRC) screening. Role-modeled within the movie are family and friends discussing screening while eating together, celebrating a birthday, shooting hoops, and playing cards. In sharing colorectal cancer information the seven, 2-4 minute telenovelas reflect Alaska Native people’s values: importance of family, community, storytelling, and humor. The story follows Rita, a nursing student, as she educates and encourages her parents to have recommended screening exams. The movie was written, directed, and filmed in Alaska and features an Alaska Native cast.

**Viewer Comments:** “Show it over and over again– It was Great!”

“It’s a great relatable story with a plot, twists, and a good ending.” “Now I feel like I can talk with my parents about getting screened more confidently.” “Emphasizes the importance of screening in an entertaining way.”

**To Learn More about Colorectal Health...**

http://www.anthctoday.org/epicenter/colon/

Check out the new interactive CD-ROM, ‘Taking Action: Colorectal Health’ and earn 2 CHAP continuing education (CE) credits. Learn through movies, stories, and interactive games. The CD shares how you can decrease your colorectal cancer (CRC) risk, find colorectal cancer early when it can best be treated, and live a healthier life. The three main sections are: Wellness Ways, Screening, and Colorectal Cancer. Resource sections include Understanding Words, Community Resources, and a CE Quiz to check your understanding.

**CHA/P Comments:**

“It’s a lot of fun! I’m good friends with other Health Aides and I told them if they want stress relief and want to have fun and learn something - do the CD. It’s really worth their time.” “I loved the Alaska Native traditional story about the little boy.”

**Colorectal Cancer (CRC) Readers’ Theatre Script**

*What’s the Big Deal?*, a 25-minute Readers’ Theatre script was developed for Alaska Native and American Indian CHA/Ps, BHAs, CHRs and the people in their communities to provide CRC screening information, share ways to discuss CRC screening, increase comfort with talking about CRC, and encourage healthy lifestyle choices. Readers’ Theatre is the coming together of a group of people to read aloud and listen to a conversation that has been scripted.


**Readers’ Theatre Comments:**

“Theatre gave us a new way to talk with patients and family.”

“The entire play was inspirational - getting screened is not embarrassing any more.”

“Great tool to start a conversation.”
Sharing Stories through Theatre

‘Understanding’, a 45-minute cancer education theatre script explores many challenging and sensitive themes including emotions associated with a cancer diagnosis, treatment, pain, end-of-life, and loss and grief. Healthy lifestyle choices and recommended cancer screening exams are voiced. Alaska Native people’s stories of hope, resilience and ways to keep our communities strong and healthy are shared.

“Stories are an important part of our culture.”
“I really respect stories and storytelling. I appreciate hearing people’s stories.”

“My favorite part of the play was when they were talking about the importance of talking about cancer. I still have problems talking.”
“I liked the humor, taking the fear out of talking about cancer.”
“Now I can better communicate with patients and their families.”

Understanding: Stepping into the Light’ featuring an all-Alaska Native cast was adapted for TV and is available on DVD from Native CIRCLE

The script has been read as part of cancer education courses as well as community gatherings, school presentations, and radio shows.

“My sister died of cancer. I wish she could have seen this play 10 years ago-she may still be alive today.”
“I was reminded of how good it is to talk about things that frighten us because it makes the fear get smaller when you open up. It takes a lot of pressure off.”
~ Theatre Participants

‘Help Yourself to Health’ Booklet and Flip Chart

New in 2012, a booklet and flip chart were created and include recommended screening exams to prevent cancer or find changes early when they can best be treated. Read the flip chart, learn wellness tips, and take the quiz to earn 2 CHAP CE hours.

“This booklet has helped me to understand more about cancer. I loved the stories, seeing people I know in the photos - lots of good information!”

“Motivated me to make a mammogram appointment.”

“Very attractive. Easy to understand. Gave me a positive feeling about having my colonoscopy screening.”
“It’s Our Voices” Cancer-Related Digital Stories by Alaska’s Community Health Workers

Digital storytelling combines a person’s recorded voice with their choice of pictures and music to bring the power of the media into the voices and hands of community members.

“I’ve seen too many people die of cancer. I believe in early screening. I know it won’t detect all cancers or prevent all cancer deaths but it will decrease some. After watching my story I hope people think about being screened. Think about the people that love you, who will be the one caring for you. Cancer affects everybody not just the person who has it.”

“One of the main things is that the product is coming from the community, the voices and faces and stories of the people in our own communities, so it’s more powerful - has more of an impact.”

“Life is a gift, live it to its fullest, stay healthy - get screened.” “What we say is who we are. Live each day to the fullest knowing that we’re here now and we want to spend it in a good way making good memories with family and friends.”

“Community members lend their natural storytelling abilities to help educate others.”

“We each have a story to tell. We are from all over Alaska with unique stories. Our stories come from the heart.”

Tools to Support Wellness Ways and Cancer Conversations

Learn anytime and earn CHAP CE credit with 3 interactive CD-ROMs, 3 informative booklets, and 5 movies made in Alaska.

1) The Story Basket: Weaving Breast Health into Our Lives
2) Conversations About Breast Cancer
3) Awakening Choices: Colon Health, Our Stories
4) Staying Strong, Staying Healthy: Alaska Native Men Speak Out About Cancer
5) What’s the Big Deal? about Colon Health

Thank you for your interest in learning more about cancer. Please continue to ask questions and learn new information. Cancer knowledge changes as new research is done. It is good to update and renew cancer information on a regular basis.

To learn more about these materials, the 5-day Cancer Education Course and the 5-day Wellness Course, or to share your ideas, please contact:
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