

E. Addressing tuberculosis (TB) in American Indian Communities

American Indians throughout the U.S. and in Washington State are disproportionately affected by tuberculosis (TB). The national rate of TB among American Indians in 2007 was 6.0/100,000, compared with 4.4/100,000 among all persons for that same year. In 2007, the Washington State TB incidence rate was 6.3/100,000 cases among American Indians compared to a rate of 4.4/100,000 among all persons in Washington State.

Due to previous disproportionate impact of TB on Washington State American Indian populations, the department has been working toward a goal to reduce the incidence of TB among American Indian persons in the state from 18.4/100,000 in 2005 to 4.0/100,000 by the year 2009. At the end of 2007, the incidence rate among American Indians in Washington State has decreased vastly to 6.3 per 100,000. With collaboration with multiple tribes across Washington State the Department of Health TB program is close to reaching the goal for 2009.

The department proposes continuing to enhance collaboration with Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, American Indian Health Commission, Indian Health Services, tribal health centers, local public health jurisdictions, and other interested parties to conduct the following activities to reduce the incidence of TB among American Indians:

- Maintain the partnerships that have been established with Washington State tribes.
- Assist the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation with the two grant awards received in 2007 to further TB testing and screening.
- Continue to work with interested parties and stakeholders to develop the 2008-2009 plans to reduce the incidence of TB among American Indians.
- Ensure implementation of CDC guidelines for preventing and controlling TB.
- Enable tribal community workers to carry out TB prevention and control activities by developing a plan for TB training for tribal and urban facilities serving American Indians.
- Identify the most effective methods of delivering and disseminating specific TB information to Indian Health Services (IHS), tribal, and urban health program practitioners.
- Continue to designate a Department of Health TB Program staff to assist on the enhancement of the partnerships.
- Offer more rigorous outreach follow up to complete assessments, start therapy, and ensure completion among high risk contacts and groups targeted for screening.

In 2008, one of the focuses of the TB Program is to continue to develop stronger relationship between the tribes and the TB Program. The TB Program will continue to approach tribal health boards and health commissions around Washington State to present updated TB information at their meetings. Another major focal point will be to act as a liaison between the collaboration with the Spokane Health District Laboratory and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation to implement two grants that were awarded in 2007 that provide screening for Latent TB Infection using IFN-g release assay (QuantiFERON- TB Gold blood assay).

Due to the high success and participation of multiple tribes across the northwest the TB training, “Building Foundations for Effective Collaborations for TB Care and Control in American Indian Populations”, that was implemented in November 2007 in Spokane, WA, we will offer future tuberculosis trainings and education. The TB Program will continue to assist in developing culturally competent brochure and educational materials to fit the needs of the American Indian population. The tuberculosis Medical Consultant and Nurse Consultants will be available to provide training for the clinic physicians and staff.

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