



Introduction

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

The vision of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium is that “Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world.” In order to know if we are moving towards that vision, continued monitoring of health metrics is needed. This report provides one way to help monitor the health of the Alaska Native population and how far we have come on the path to becoming “the healthiest people in the world.” These data can help demonstrate significant health improvements that have been achieved among Alaska Native people. In addition, health areas of concern and inequities in health status can be readily identified for improvement efforts.

This report provides an overview of the health status of Alaska Native people living in Alaska statewide, as well as by tribal health regions. The Alaska Native Epidemiology Center has divided the state into 12 tribal health regions, which allows for the use of readily available data. In general, the tribal health regions closely align with the service areas of the regional tribal health organizations.

The health indicators reported are used as measures of various dimensions of health status and were selected based on their importance to population health; data availability; and relationship to key health issues within the Alaska Tribal Health System. Indicators include health

outcomes, health risk behaviors, and health protective factors. The different measures assess different aspects of health, including measures that cover the lifespan and known determinants of health.

Most of the data presented in this report are for Alaska Native/American Indian people. Comparison groups, such as the Alaska or U.S. White population, are used to highlight areas where disparities may exist.

We recognize that data presented here tell only a small part of the story. There are areas for which reliable and local data are not readily available, and we recognize that this report is not comprehensive. To really know the whole picture of health in Alaska, one needs to talk to people living in each region because only they know things that numbers can't convey or collect. We also recognize that each data point represents individuals and their families, and that these are not just statistics. Furthermore, the information gained from the interpretation of data are only part of the story. Nevertheless, these data provide a snapshot of where we are to guide advocacy, policy development, program planning, and evaluation. We hope this document serves as a useful resource for those interested in Alaska Native health issues.

This report provides one way to help monitor the health of the Alaska Native population and how far we have come on the path to becoming “the healthiest people in the world.”