



Native American x H1N1 = 4 Times Higher Risk of Death

Reservations get assistance with H1N1 education from National Relief Charities.

Phoenix, AZ, January 27, 2010 --(PR.com)-- The facts are in: For Native Americans, the risk of death from H1N1 is four times more likely than it is for other Americans. According to the Department of Health and Human Services and the CDC, more Native Americans die from H1N1 complications because of pre-existing health issues such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease.

National Relief Charities works on 75+ reservations year-round and is well aware of disease rates for Native Americans. Overall life expectancy for Native Americans has improved in recent decades but still trails that of other Americans by a few years. Diabetes has reached epidemic proportions for Native Americans, who are twice as likely to die from diabetes than other groups. On the Navajo Reservation, the diabetes rate is 4 times higher than the national average. On the Pine Ridge Reservation, it's 3 times higher.

Diabetes and heart disease are also linked. In fact, the Indian Health Service cites that, for people with diabetes, the most common cause of death is cardiovascular disease. Forced changes in diet, economics, and lifestyle markedly increased the rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney failure, and obesity for Native Americans - all of which contribute to heart attacks, heart disease, and cardiac deaths.

Heart disease is a 20% higher risk for Native Americans than for any other race in the U.S., and the Center for Disease Control reports that heart disease kills American Indians at younger ages. For the Navajo Nation, heart disease ranks second as the cause of death and it's on the rise, according to HHS.

Asthma rates are also high and on the rise, especially for Native American children. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that the asthma rate for American youth under age 20 is 9%, compared to 13% for Native youth.

These combined factors all put Native Americans at higher risk of H1N1:

- o Twice as likely to die from diabetes as other Americans
- o 20% more likely to have heart disease
- o More likely to die from heart disease
- o More likely to have heart complications from diabetes
- o Children one-third more likely to have asthma
- o Children more likely to have diabetes and associated heart disease

Given that many reservation communities have high unemployment and limited access to preventative healthcare, education about H1N1 is key. National Relief Charities has seen reservation programs working hard to bring H1N1 education to their communities. They've already supported 15 different H1N1 and flu clinics on 12 reservations in the last 3 months.

CHRs (community health representatives) and other health workers are very proactive in offering regular



classes and wellness events for diabetes, heart health, nutrition, obesity, exercise, health screenings, and more. February is National Heart Month and we know they'll be doing heart health education. National Relief Charities supports health-related education and activities year-round on the reservations in our 12-state service area. Last year, they helped over 130 reservation programs bring preventative health measures to their communities, by providing product incentives that helped the programs increase participation. Typical incentives are shampoo, lotion, cleaning supplies, and other practical items that are needed but not at the top of the list for reservation families faced with unemployment or household income below the poverty line.

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National Relief Charities is a nonprofit dedicated to quality of life for American Indians living on remote, poverty-stricken reservations. NRC has been serving Native Americans for 20 years and is supported by a network of over 1,000 reservation program partners.



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Contact NRC for health-related photos.

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