



Mission

To alleviate the unequal burden of cancer among Native Americans of the Southwest through research, training, and community outreach programs in collaboration with the communities we serve.

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The Partnership for Native American Cancer Prevention (NACP) is a partnership of Native American communities, Northern Arizona University, the University of Arizona Cancer Center, and the National Cancer Institute to address cancer health disparities in Native Americans.

Greetings!

This month marks the one-year anniversary of a pandemic changing the way we work, teach, learn, and interact with others. In this issue, we highlight some of the ways the partnership has adapted. We also highlight a new publication and congratulate Dr. Naomi Lee for being recognized by the University of Rochester, her alma mater. We dedicate this issue to family members, friends, and colleagues who have passed from COVID-19.

Jani Ingram

Francine Gachupin

Jason Wilder

Margaret Briele

COVID-19 Impacts

The **Research Project** titled, *Improving Shared Decision-Making about Cancer Screenings Among Native American Women Experiencing Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities*, has found that group testing is slower than anticipated due to activity restrictions and modified workflows. Despite these challenges, the team has partnered with Hopi Cancer support Services and the Tucson Indian Center to adapt to a fully-remote program. The participant dyads receive a mailed toolkit to use while going through the curriculum with the health educator over the phone, Zoom, or by video tour.

The **Outreach Core** had to transition from face-to-face interaction to a Zoom format. The team has been working with the Navajo Nation Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention Program staff to develop a podcast to describe safety measures so Navajo citizens are comfortable getting cancer screening and treatment during the pandemic. The team developed and implemented a Zoom Dissemination training for research teams to explore innovative ways to share their knowledge and findings with parting communities. The UA Outreach team continued with its dissemination of education materials via USPS mailings and social media (Facebook and Twitter) and held meetings, webinars and human subjects trainings via Zoom.

The **Research Education Core (REC)** made many changes to support trainees' continued education and research during the COVID-19 pandemic. The key components to their success are: *flexibility, technology, and hope*. **Flexibility:** Laboratory immersions were initiated with flexible start/end dates or deferral of remote options and flexible schedules to ensure a safe research experience. The REC teams provided routine check-in meetings and resources such as laptops and mobile hot spot to ensure students had the necessary tools to be successful student researchers. **Technology:** Creativity blossomed as virtual technology became the norm for every event from practicing dissemination to networking as the REC leveraged their virtual environment to hire two new trainees from UACC Phoenix research labs for the first time. Savings on travel, from virtual meetings, allowed for REC funds to better offset mentor contributions to training and relieve some pressure due to COVID-19 related research funding issues. **Hope:** Students and REC staff participated in NACP supplies/food drives and making hand sanitizer for tribal communities (led by Maria Jackson and Jani Ingram). New collaborations between NACP REC and the Bridges R25 grant enabled the new cancer disparities course to move to a virtual environment, hiring two AI/AN students to support the curriculum, and hiring another AI/AN student to support audiovisual material development for enhanced engagement and recruitment.



NACP Project Publishes Their Community-Engaged Research Process



Drs. Williamson, Armin, and Baldwin

Drs. Heather Williamson, Julie Armin, and Julie Baldwin are developing a breast and cervical cancer screening education program for Native American women with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They identified community partners and planned for their community-engaged research project during the first year of their NACP funded project. Lessons learned from their project planning work were recently published online in the *Annals of International Occupational Therapy* journal. The article analyzes their qualitative data within the Indigenous research framework and

discusses the importance of ongoing reflection, relationship building, and co-designing research projects with community members. The link to the published article is: <https://www.healio.com/occupational-therapy/journals/otannals/%7B11cf5181-1ed5-4b9c-b8f3-6e988e2d3e27%7D/community-engaged-research-to-address-health-disparities-of-indigenous-women-withdisabilities#divReadThis>

Congratulations Dr. Naomi Lee



Dr. Naomi Lee

Dr. Naomi Lee was recognized by her alma mater, the University of Rochester, as a “Visionary Women of Rochester.” She is one of the women alumni who made a profound impact in their communities and fields of study. As a Seneca woman, she is the first and only Native American doctoral recipient in chemistry from the University of Rochester. As an NAU faculty member, Dr. Lee’s research includes developing peptide and protein-based vaccines towards chronic and infectious diseases. She also applies her biomedical knowledge to improve the health and welfare of Indigenous populations through various projects to include the 3-year NACP pilot titled, “Viewing American Indian Cervical Cancer Disparities through the Lens of the Vaginal Microbiome”. She is applying her

expertise as a panelist on the COVID-19 Prevention Network. As such, she is a co-investigator on two COVID-19 projects aimed at identifying misconceptions and providing education to Arizona’s most at-risk populations through NAU’s Center for Health Equity Research. One of Dr. Lee’s priorities is to increase the diverse pool of academic and research professionals. As she stated, “We need to start getting our Native students through these pathways to academia and research. That’s one of my goals. If we increase the pool at a younger age, you’re more likely to get more students through this academic path.” Finally, she is an officer in the Army Reserves and serves on COVID-19 military missions.

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