



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!

Coretta Scott King noted that, "Struggle is a never-ending process. Freedom is never really won. You earn it and win it in every generation". This month, we celebrate the arrival of two new members to the NACP family. We report news on the success of some of our NACP researchers for grant and fellowship awards. We share insights on prostate cancer. We hope you enjoy reading this issue.






Jani Ingram Francine Gachupin Jason Wilder Margaret Briele

Insights on Prostate Cancer from Dr. Andrew Kraft

Although prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men and the second leading cause of death behind lung cancer, it may be asymptomatic until it has widely spread in the body. This means that prostate cancer may not show symptoms until it is too late to be curable. One out of eight men will be diagnosed with this cancer in their lifetime. The incidence increases among those men who have a close family member with prostate cancer. Like most cancers, if caught early, it can be cured by local therapy. Treatments include surgery or radiation. The best way to get the benefits of early diagnosis is by having a yearly prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test. With results in hand, your physician will be looking for a marked increase in the PSA value from year to year suggesting a cancer is growing. Being screened can save your life from this silent killer.



Jonathan Credo & his mom, Kathy

Congratulations Mr. Jonathan Credo

NACP is excited to congratulate Jonathan Credo, a MD/PhD student at the University of Arizona, on being awarded a Fellowship (F31 Award) from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences beginning September 1, 2021. It is a three-year award, and it will allow him to work on a project "Neurological effects of toxic metal exposure in model rodents collected in zones of industrial agriculture on the U.S.-Mexico border". Jonathan graduated from Northern Arizona University with biomedical and chemistry degrees in 2014. He has been a NACP student researcher for many years.



Well-women's Video Premier

Through a highly collaborative effort, NACP has produced a short video to encourage women to get an annual well-women exam, which could include screening for early detection of cancer. Dr. Melissa Herbst-Kralovetz, with the cervical cancer research project, came up with the video concept in collaboration with the Outreach Core. Additional collaborators on the video project were Dr. Naomi Lee, an

NAU co-leader of the cervical cancer research project, the University of Arizona Cancer Center's communications office, and the Native Americans for Community Action clinic in Flagstaff, Arizona. Dr. Gachupin and students from Dr. Lee's lab and from the Outreach Core were featured in the video. The video will be shown at the Native Americans for Community Action clinic and has been shared on social media. It can be viewed at: <https://cancercenter.arizona.edu/news/2021/08/uarizona-cancer-center-nacp-contact-and-outreach-core-pi-dr-gachupin-discusses>



Celebration of New Arrivals

NACP celebrates the arrivals of Bryce Everett Farrell to Dr. Ricky Camplain (Northern Arizona University) and David Farrell on June 23, 2021 and Eloisa “Ellie” Summer Gacon to Dr. Jennifer Erdrich (University of Arizona) and Trey Gacon on June 26, 2021. Both Bryce and Ellie as well as their NACP moms are doing well.



Jennifer Erdrich, Trey Gacon,
and Ellie



Ricky Camplain and Bryce

Recent Grant Award



Archana Varadaraj PhD

Naren Rajasekaran, PhD

Megha Padi PhD

The Varadaraj lab is interested in the protein fibronectin and its functions in cancer and fibrosis. Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is an irreversible lung disease with no effective treatment options. In the year 2000, 89,000 patients were living with IPF in the United States and 34,000 new cases of IPF are being diagnosed each year. IPF is a disease of unknown etiology and myriad

environmental factors are known to contribute to the development of the disease in susceptible individuals. During fibrosis, cells in the lungs that are called fibroblasts, change into cells called myofibroblasts. Myofibroblasts then begin to produce vast amounts of a type of protein called fibronectin, which through several steps, eventually affects lung architecture impacting lung function. In our lab, we identified a part of a protein called a domain that had the function of degrading the pathologic fibronectin in myofibroblasts. NACP congratulates Dr. Archana Veradaraj of Northern Arizona University who was awarded a R15 grant from the National Institute of Heart, Lung, and Blood for a grant titled “SOCS domain-mediated fibronectin matrix degradation on fibrosis reversal”. Her co-Investigators include Dr. Naren Rajasekaran from Northern Arizona University and Dr. Megha Padi from the University of Arizona.

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