



Native Aging Visions

A Resource for Native Elders

*A publication of the National Resource Center on Native American Aging
located at the University of North Dakota Center for Rural Health
School of Medicine & Health Sciences*

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Director's Column

Dosha, friends –
Spring has arrived. The trees are in bud and there are dandelions in the lawn! As things start anew here, I wanted to introduce you to a few new staffers at the National Resource Center on Native American Aging (NRCNAA): Jacob Davis, our new Project Coordinator, and Sara Del Norte and Patty Lambert, both graduate research assistants with the project. Sara and Patty will be working with tribes and partners on a number of projects, including the Elder's needs assessments, the WELL-Balanced (Wise Elders Living Longer) project, and providing training and technical assistance on a number of other things. Jacob is hard at work coordinating the WELL-Balanced project, and working on our elder abuse initiatives.

In addition, we bid a fond farewell to Kim Ruliffson, Project Coordinator, as she finished a master's degree and took on a new position across campus. I would like to take a moment to thank Kim for all of her hard work and dedication to the project for these past five years, and wish her the best of luck in her new position at the UND Wellness Center! She will be sorely missed.

A number of exciting projects are ramping up at the NRCNAA for the coming year, including the piloting of the WELL-Balanced program with local and regional tribal partners. We are excited to get this program up and running in our tribal communities, and after the initial pilot, we look forward to the broader release of the program. We look forward to working with all of our partners!

Have a wonderful and healthy Year!

— Twyla Baker-Demaray

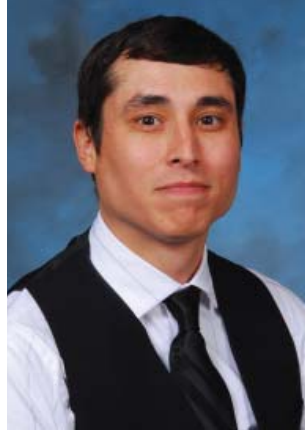


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Jacob Davis, BA

Jacob Davis is the Project Coordinator of the National Resource Center on Native American Aging at Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Grand Forks.



Jacob Davis

In this position, Davis serves the National Resource Center on Native American Aging on a state, regional, and national level as an administrative and resource person for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian aging issues. He provides assistance in the areas of financial management, project development, and grant management.

Before joining the CRH, Davis worked as an Administrative Research Assistant/Grant Writer for the Turtle Mountain Community College since August 2006. He has assisted and administered research projects including the Genetics and Pre-eclampsia

Project funded by the IdEA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE), Risk Factors Associated with Severe Injury and Mortality on a Rural American Indian Reservation: 1996-2006 funded through the Colorado Injury Control Research Center (CICRC), Native American Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Educational Workshop funded through CICRC, Domestic Violence Silent Witness Silhouette Presentation funded through CICRC, and the Heart of Young Native Women Workshop funded through the CICRC.

Davis stays busy through involvement in community, state, and national groups such as the Turtle Mountain Wellness Conference, North Dakota Academy of Science, and the Native Research Network. He is also actively involved on issues regarding domestic violence and child abuse in Indian Country.

He is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and is originally from Belcourt, ND. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology with a minor in criminal justice from Minot State University. Davis plans to pursue a Masters degree in community development.

Winter 2010 Fact Sheet: **CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE (CHF)**

Analysis of the data obtained from “Identifying Our Needs: A Survey of Elders” indicates that one of ten American Indian and Alaska Native elders have congestive heart failure. This is a condition in which the heart is unable to pump a sufficient quantity of blood to meet the body’s needs. Elders with chronic conditions (hypertension and diabetes) and elders who are overweight or obese are at increased risk for CHF.

Congestive heart failure is a serious chronic health condition. Researchers are developing and testing new treatments, but you can take steps to reduce your risk of developing CHF: follow a heart healthful diet, stop smoking, exercise regularly, and if you are overweight or obese, lose weight.

The complete Winter 2010 Fact Sheet is available on our website www.nrcnaa.org. If you would prefer a printed copy, please call 1-800-896-7628, and we will mail copies to you.

Living Safely at Home

by LaVonne Fox, PhD, OTR/L

For the majority of Native American elders, living at home is their preference and, in most cases, is the preference of their families. The main reason elders have to leave their homes is because they have fallen and hurt themselves.

There are simple changes you can make in your home that will make living at home safer and more comfortable. Most of the tools and products you need to make these changes are available in your local hardware store or home improvement center. You can begin making some of these simple changes right now:

Increase Lighting throughout Your Home

1. Open the curtains and use natural light.
2. When lightbulbs burn out, replace them with higher wattage bulbs; especially the lights over the counters and stove in the kitchen, in the bathroom, on porches and sidewalks, and in entrance halls and stairways

Walk Safely

1. Remove all rugs that you could slip or trip on.
2. Remove clutter in the hallways, doorways, and stairs so you can walk safely and easily through your home.
3. Remove or replace any worn or torn carpeting and linoleum. Nail down trim or floor boards that are uneven or sticking out.
4. Make sure no nail heads are sticking out.
5. See if someone could put handrails in the hallways so you have something to hold on to for support and balance.
6. Wear shoes or slippers that are flat, nonslip, fit well, and are comfortable.

7. Have someone help you move furniture and extension cords in each room so you can move around safely without tripping.
8. Paint or put bright colored tape along the edges of steps so you can see where each step begins and ends.

Make Your Bathroom Safer

1. If it is hard to sit on the toilet, you can buy a piece that attaches to your toilet set to make it higher so you don't have to bend down as far.



2. Change your showerhead to one that you can control how hot the water is so you don't burn yourself.
3. Put non-slip strips or a rubber mat on the floor of the tub or shower so you don't slip and fall.
4. Have someone put grab bars around the bathtub and near the toilet so you have something to hold on to. All that is needed is a screwdriver and tape measure.
5. If you have trouble balancing or get tired easily when taking a shower, buy a bath bench to sit on while you shower. It's safer and makes it easier for you to take your shower.

Make Your Kitchen Safer

1. Have an ABC-rated fire extinguisher that is easy to reach, easy to use, and is near your stove.
2. Put the main pots, pans, and groceries on the shelves that are easiest for you to reach.
3. Label the stove controls, or put a line where the medium temperature is.
4. Remove all rugs that you could slip or trip on.



General Safety

1. Make sure there are smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor and outside each bedroom.
2. Try to exercise or stay active so you can keep your strength up.
3. Know when you cannot do something safely, and ask for help.
4. Consider asking someone to put a peephole on the door that leads outside so you can see who is at the door without opening it.
5. If it is difficult to get out of chairs or a bed that is low, you can buy extenders or risers that will make these higher.



Resources

Here are two common resources for you if you would like more information or suggestions.

1. American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). Website is <http://aota.org>. This site has several documents with tips on how to make sure you are living safely in your home. You can also contact the AOTA by mail at 4720 Montgomery Lane, PO Box 31220 Bethesda, MD 20824-1220 or call 301-652-2682
2. American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Website is http://www.aarp.org/family/housing/livable_communities. This site has a lot of information available with checklists for each room. You can also contact the AARP by mail at AARP 601 E Street N.W. Washington, DC 20049 or call 1-888-687-2277

You now have ideas and suggestions that can help make you and your home safer. Falls are the leading cause of injury for people over the age of 65 years. Making a few changes can help you prevent a fall and live longer in your own home.

The purpose of this fact sheet is not to offer medical advice. To discuss your particular problem or condition, contact your doctor.



Health Care Bill

Check our website for easy to understand details about the new health care bill, including a brief summary of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act updates signed into law on March 23.

Patty Lambert

My name is Patty Lambert. I am a graduate research assistant at the National Resource Center on Native American Aging (NRCNAA). I am Sisseton- Wahpeton Dakota and was raised on the Spirit Lake reservation. I graduated with honors from UND in 2006, BA English/Indian Studies, and now I'm back to finish my MA in English. My first foray into research as an undergrad was at the Center for Rural Health with Dr. Richard Ludtke and Dr. Leander "Russ" McDonald. I've had the opportunity to work on three of the four cycles of this project. So coming back to work here is like coming home to my research roots.



Patty Lambert

My interest in the health of Native elders goes back to my own family. Both my grandparents passed away when I was young, and I wish I would have had more

time to spend learning from them. Over the years, I've collected many surrogate grandparents who have taught me so much. I've been fortunate enough to work on various projects with elders from Spirit Lake and other Dakota communities relating to language and culture in my previous position as director of Indian Studies at Cankdeska Cikana Community College in Fort Totten. The time I spent there was a great reminder of all that our elders have to offer our communities. I thoroughly enjoy any time I get to go home to visit with elders and have amazing conversations. I always come away having learned something new. Our elders need to be treasured for the knowledge they have and are willing to pass on.

As a student, I've come to the conclusion that no matter what area I decide to go into or where I end up after completing my education, it really doesn't serve a purpose unless I have a burden for my people and community. There is always some way for us to give back to the communities we come from.

Join us on Facebook

Become a fan of the NRCNAA on Facebook to keep up with news and information related to Native American aging!
<http://www.facebook.com/NRCNAA>



CARING FOR OUR ELDERS: Native Elder Caregiver Curriculum (NECC)

American Indian elders are valued members of their communities. As the elder population increases there is a need for more long-term care options for American Indian people. Elders prefer to remain in their own home and community settings, that is, they prefer to “age in place”. The Native Elder Caregiver Curriculum (NECC) was designed through a collaborative effort between the NRCNAA and Cankdeska Cikana Community College, with the help of elders and community members of the Spirit Lake Nation. This “elder caregiver” curriculum is a tool to assist caregivers who have the responsibility of caring for their elders. The caregivers’

needs must be met so they may continue to live out their values of respect, generosity, compassion, and fortitude while honoring loved ones who need their help.

The course is divided into 3 training sessions and can be offered over 3 days, or divided into smaller segments to meet time restrictions. The complete instructor guide along with images of the power point slides is available as a PDF file on our web site (www.nrcnaa.org). For more information on implementing the course in your community or to find locations where the course is currently being offered, please email us at nrcnaa@medicine.nodak.edu, or call (800) 896-7628.

Going Green: Update

The spring 2009 issue of Native Aging Visions introduced our going green initiative. So far, only 175 people have signed up for electronic delivery, which leaves 3,300 still on our mailing list. I know some of you do not have access to the Internet or even to a computer, so we are happy to continue mailing your Visions newsletter to you. This issue will again be mailed to everyone on the mailing list.

When you receive this issue, please take a moment and consider the cost of paper, printing, and mailing. I know your budgets are just as tight as ours right now. Any money we save on publishing and mailing can be spent on providing more programs directly to you. For example, if half of you switched to electronic delivery, we would save enough to train and equip 12 volunteers to teach our new WELL-Balanced exercise class. Maybe four of you in the same office each get your own copy—we could mail one copy to the office and save the cost of the other three.

There are no postcards to fill out or passwords to remember. Just call us at our toll free number (800) 896-7628 or e-mail us at nrcnaa@medicine.nodak.edu. We can send you an e-mail when a new issue is available. Back issues are available on our website at www.nrcnaa.org.

With your help we will grow **greener** every year!



Boozhoo,

My name is Sara del Norte. I am a new graduate research assistant in the National Resource Center on Native American Aging (NRCNAA). I am Saginaw Chippewa and Oneida. I grew up in Michigan. My great-grandparents lived next



Sara del Norte

door to me, and I spent a lot of time with them. They also took me with them during the summer to the Upper Peninsula. I was lucky enough to have them until they passed away when I was 23 years old. They were the most influential people in my life, and I have great respect for our elders and their needs.

I graduated with honors from University of Michigan in 2004, BA Anthropology. I have an interest in medicine as well; I took the pre-med classes along with my major. Anthropology is a highly controversial field, and I know that especially in the past there was a lot of incorrect information being promoted by anthropologists. I believe that, if we hold our own microphone, we have the power to undo some of the damage done by past anthropologists. By aligning my anthropology background with my graduate major, Educational Foundations & Research, and the work we do at NRCNAA, I hope to help our elders gain access to services, have better expected health outcomes, and enable our current and future generations of elders and caregivers to have higher quality of life.

I am very happy to be able to work with Twyla Baker-Demaray and the staff at NRCNAA. We have exciting work on the horizon. I look forward to serving and working with our elders. Miigwetch!

WELL-Balanced Workshop

The inaugural WELL (Wise elders Living Longer) -Balanced train-the-trainer workshop was held at the Wellness Center on the campus of the University of North Dakota March 8 – 10. Laurie Betting, the program developer, along with Jennifer Carlson, Nikki Seabloom, and the NRCNAA staff conducted 3 days of exercise, inspiration, and education. Our visitors braved typical cold, damp North Dakota March weather and airline delays to get ready to pilot test our new WELL-Balanced fitness program. The class combines fun, education, and exercise to help elders prevent falls, cope with the rigors of aging, and develop strategies for independent living.

Heather Daniels and Deborah Nyquist from the Dena'ian Health Clinic in Kenai, Alaska, Carrie Jackson and Winslow Evans from the Blackfeet Eagle Shield Center in Browning, Montana, Renae Mathson and Jennifer Young from the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium in Sitka, Alaska, along with Fatima Pina and Abby Stover from the Otoe-Missouria Senior Center in Red Rock, Oklahoma, contributed their experience and insight to help us finalize the content of the 16 sessions. They will be offering WELL-Balanced in their home communities during the next few months and will assist us with a final evaluation at the end of July.

WELL-Balanced will be available for everyone this fall. Keep checking our website for updates.





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Need Information?

Please visit our website at www.nrcnaa.org. Use the directory on the left side of the main page to access information on:

- **Funding** links to the National Rural Assistance Center (RAC) where you can find up to date information on funding opportunities throughout the United States. If you need further guidance, click on Contact Us at the bottom of the page. RAC information specialists will be happy to assist you in your search for information relating to funding, rural health, and human services.
- **Resources** contains links to aging information, caregiving support, health care, long term care, elder abuse, and victim services as well as a communication and information dissemination site for Title VI Directors.
- **Needs Assessment and Cycle IV Materials** provide necessary forms and instructions on how to conduct “Identifying Our Needs: A Survey of Elders”. The survey can provide the data needed for Title VI nutrition and caregiving grants (awarded by the Administration on Aging) as well as documenting needs for long term planning and other grants.