



Native Aging Visions

A Resource for Native Elders

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Tawnshi!

Greetings to all. I hope this message finds you well. Here at the National Resource Center on Native American Aging spring has sprung and we look forward to the even stronger sunshine of summer. The sounds of spring fill the air like the humming of leaf blowers and lawnmowers. The birds have come back north and fill the air with their beauty and announce their arrival with many different calls. I can just hear my elders from the past teaching the younger ones about the different types of birds, distinct bird songs/cries, and migrating seasons. My Mother would say, "Listen, the birds are calling for rain."

The month of May commemorates several different elder topics as you will read in the coming pages. May is the 50th annual Older Americans month and elders are encouraged to "get into the act." This theme promotes empowerment of elders to get involved in their health care. It is also National Osteoporosis month. Osteoporosis is a significant issue across Indian Country; it is important that our elders have the proper nutrition and exercise/activity to add to the prevention and treatment of this chronic condition.

The NRCNAA is preparing for June 15th which is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). As we honor our elders every day, WEAAD is an opportunity for communities to come together to raise awareness of elder abuse and how it erodes the strength of our Native elders and our communities. The NRCNAA shares in this commemoration by planning different purple campaign activities for each annual June 15th WEAAD. As I think of World

Elder Abuse Awareness Day I think back on the ways my elders showed us love and there are so many ways we, now, can give that love back to our Native elders and elders across the nations.

My Mother loved listening to music, the old-time country and western music or Metis fiddle music and as she listened she would reminisce about waltzing with my Father. Sometimes as we listened to her music, I would take her hands and dance with her as she sat in her wheelchair. She enjoyed it immensely and it was a simple pleasure; it didn't cost anything but some well-deserved time. My Father enjoyed being driven to town to get birdseed for the many different bird houses that he tended. It was also a great opportunity for him to talk about how it was in the old days, as he spoke we were quiet and listened.

Please remember, our elders possess crucial historic and life-strategic knowledge, we need to take the time to give the elders our undivided attention so that they can pass the wisdom down through the generations. The Creator has truly wired our elders to be the keepers and teachers of our Native wisdom whether it be through stories (sometimes humorous), great spiritual faith, and astonishing resiliency.

I ask every one of you to love and cherish our amazing elders. We are cut from a strong, courageous, and nurturing cloth, the same cloth as our Native elders. Bless you all. Be safe and well.

Many Blessings! Miigwech.
- Paula Morin-Carter

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Center for
Rural Health
University of North Dakota
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May is Older Americans Month

May 2015 is the 50th Annual Older Americans month. This year's designated theme is "Get into the Act." The focus is on how older adults are taking charge of their health, getting engaged in their communities, and making a positive impact in the lives of others. It is a time to recognize the contributions made in our lives by Older Americans. This month's celebration is to ensure the empowerment of Older Americans to maintain strength and mobility in their daily lives.

Older Americans month was established in 1963. A meeting in April of that year between President John F. Kennedy and members of the National Council of Senior Citizens led to designating May as "Senior Citizens Month," the prelude to "Older Americans

Month." Older Americans Month is a long standing annual observation that gives us the opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of community engagement as a tool for enhancing the well-being of older adults.

In celebration of Older Americans month, communities can organize a healthy aging activity event. Healthy Aging activities such as yoga or walking, nutrition classes or consultations, and brain-stimulating activities are a few ideas that can be performed at the event. In recognition of Older Americans month let's "Get into Action!"

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May is National Osteoporosis Month

The month of May is designated to raise awareness and promote prevention of Osteoporosis. It encourages individuals to identify risk factors and take preventative measures to build and maintain strong bones. In addition, we are also encouraged to make lifestyle changes to promote bone health. Osteoporosis is a silent disease that affects nine million Americans as well as 43 million who have low bone density that puts them at risk. Sixty percent of adults age 50 and older are at risk of breaking a bone.

There are several risk factors for osteoporosis that include:

- ☼ Aging
- ☼ A family history of the condition
- ☼ Women past menopause (who have a lowered amount of estrogen, a hormone important in building bones)
- ☼ Inadequate intake of calcium and Vitamin D
- ☼ An inactive lifestyle
- ☼ Small-boned and/or underweight body type
- ☼ Excess abdominal fat
- ☼ Use of certain medications
- ☼ Medical conditions such as liver or kidney disease, diabetes, or thyroid problems
- ☼ Smoking or alcohol abuse

Preventative measures and treatment for osteoporosis:

- ☼ Get enough calcium (both male and female seniors over the age of 50 should aim to eat 1,200 milligrams of calcium per day)
- ☼ Maintain a healthy weight
- ☼ Get enough exercise—and the right kind
- ☼ Limit alcohol and quit smoking
- ☼ Take medications correctly
- ☼ Make fall prevention a priority

Ways to protect your spine include:

- ☼ Do not slump, head-forward posture
- ☼ Do not bend forward from the waist
- ☼ Do not twist the spine to a point of strain
- ☼ Do not twist the trunk and bend forward when doing activities such as sneezing, vacuuming, or lifting

If you are concerned you may have osteoporosis or are at risk, ask your doctor about getting a bone mineral density (BMD) test.

Continue on next page.



This test is recommended for the hip and spine using a dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) machine which is used to diagnose osteoporosis.

There is no cure for osteoporosis. Diet, exercise and a healthy lifestyle are vital in preventing and managing the disease. Let's take part and raise awareness and prevention during National Osteoporosis Awareness month in May.

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Breast Cancer Detection, Prevention, and Awareness

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among American Indian and Alaska Native women. Even though American Indian and Alaska Native women have lower rates of breast cancer and breast cancer mortality than other races, it is still very important to receive early screenings for breast cancer in order to have a better chance of identifying it in the early stages and successfully treating the cancer. Even men can be diagnosed with this type of cancer. It is very important to detect breast cancer in the early stages as it can make a difference in successfully treating the disease. Early detection screening tests such as mammograms can help to find breast cancer in its early stages, when it is easier to treat.

Some other ideas of how women can take steps to detect breast cancer early:

- ☛ Ask doctors and nurses

to speak to women about the importance of getting screened for breast cancer.

- ☛ Encourage women ages 40 to 49 to talk with their doctors about when to start getting mammograms.
- ☛ Organize an event to talk with women ages 50 to 74 in your community about getting mammograms every 2 years.

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Alzheimer's Disease Detection and Awareness

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia among older people. It is an irreversible, progressive brain disease that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills. Even the simplest tasks become difficult for a person battling the disease. Scientists are not entirely clear on what causes Alzheimer's, but believe it is likely attributed to a mix of genetic, environmental, and life-style factors.

Today, over 5 million Americans are affected by Alzheimer's disease. Every 67 seconds someone in the United States develops the disease. It is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States. Approximately 500,000 people die each year because they have Alzheimer's. Nationally, it is estimated that 3.2 million women, compared to 1.8 million men 65 years old and over have Alzheimer's. Women have a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's disease than men do. Females have a one in six chance compared to males at one in 11.

The 10 early detection signs of Alzheimer's disease:

- ☛ Memory loss that disrupts daily life.
- ☛ Challenges in planning or solving problems.
- ☛ Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure.
- ☛ Confusion with time or place.

- ☛ Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.
- ☛ New problems with words in speaking or writing.
- ☛ Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.
- ☛ Decreased or poor judgment.
- ☛ Withdrawal from work or social activities.
- ☛ Changes in mood and personality.

There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease, but there are available treatments. Unfortunately, these treatments are unable to stop Alzheimer's from progressing; however, they do temporarily slow the worsening of the dementia symptoms. Research continues in this field throughout the world. The goals are to eventually find better ways to treat the disease, delay its onset, and prevent it from developing. For more information on Alzheimer's disease go to the website www.alz.org or contact the helpline at 800-272-3900.

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Celebrate World Elder Abuse

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) began in 2006 and has been recognized annually in June. It is a day that gives communities the opportunity to raise awareness of elder abuse by sharing information about abuse, neglect, and exploitation that victimizes elders. On this day, we are able to promote and share information about resources and services that assist in protecting victims and ensuring offenders are held accountable.

Elder Abuse refers to intentional or negligent acts by a caregiver or “trusted” individual that causes (or potentially causes) harm to an older adult. It is estimated that five million elders are victims of abuse every year. The types of abuse include: 1) Physical Abuse, 2) Sexual Abuse, 3) Emotional/Psychological Abuse, 4) Neglect, 5) Financial Exploitation, and 6) Self-Neglect.

Ways to Prevent Elder Abuse include:

- ☼ Learn the signs of elder abuse and neglect
- ☼ Call or visit an elderly loved one
- ☼ Provide a respite break for a caregiver
- ☼ Ask your bank manager to train tellers on how to detect elder financial abuse
- ☼ Ask your doctor to ask you and all other senior patients about possible family violence in their lives

- ☼ Contact your local Adult Protective Services or Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- ☼ Give a presentation about elder abuse
- ☼ Volunteer to be a friendly visitor
- ☼ Contact local paper, radio, or TV station suggesting they cover World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15) or Grandparents Day (September)
- ☼ Dedicate your bikeathon/marathon/other event to elder mistreatment awareness and prevention
- ☼ Join the Ageless Alliance

Ideas for Raising Awareness on June 15:

- ☼ Host a public awareness event geared toward seniors
- ☼ Send out a press release or submit an editorial to discuss elder abuse awareness and prevention efforts
- ☼ Educate yourself and others about elder abuse
- ☼ Create posters to display in your community to raise awareness of WEAAD
- ☼ Display purple ribbons around your community on June 15 in honor of WEAAD

Awareness Day on June 15, 2015

- 🌀 Organize a conference or training focused on elder abuse awareness and available community resources

Let's all recognize WEAAD on June 15 this year, by wearing our purple ribbons to help raise awareness and put an end to elder abuse. If elder abuse is suspected please contact the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 to be connected to your local reporting agency or visit www.ncea.aoa.gov or www.nieji.org for more information and resources.

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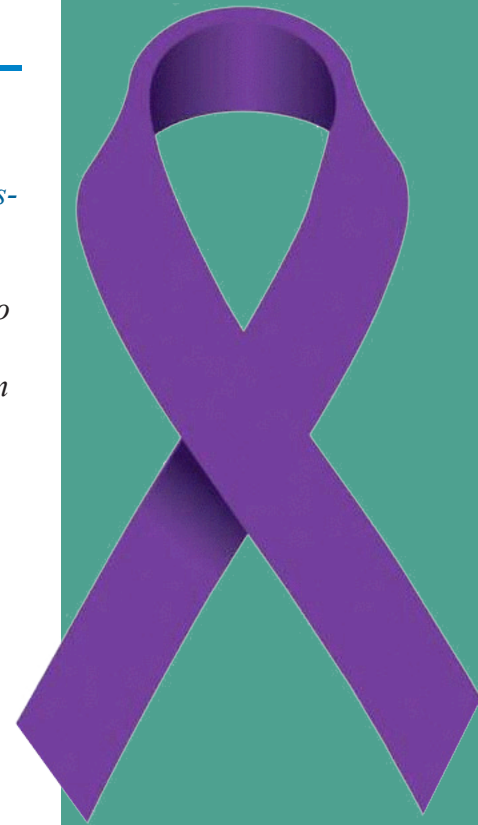
**Break The Silence.
Unite Against
Elder Abuse.**

Emotional/Financial Abuse

Robert is 75 and lives in his own home with his 36 year old grandson John. John has invited his girlfriend to live with them without his grandfather's consent. Robert pays all the bills associated with his house without contribution from John or his girlfriend. John sometime helps his grandfather with chores but talks down to him telling him "You're useless. No-one needs you. Why don't you do the world a favor and don't wake up tomorrow."

Neglect

Henry is 65 and lives with his son Philip who is 38 years old. Henry had a stroke that left him with communication and mobility issues. Philip has a job where he works 12 hour shifts. While Philip is at work he leaves his father Henry by himself with a diaper on to hold his feces/urine until he gets off work.





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Ojibwa Indian School students participate in activity raising awareness for WEAAD

In April, students at Ojibwa Indian School located on the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa reservation participated in an activity to show how much they respect and love their Native American elders.

Twenty-six students, who are part of the Gifted and Talented Art program at Ojibwa, drew a picture of their favorite elder. Students drew their grandparents, an aunt, an uncle, or an important elder in their life and their favorite activity to do with that elder. It was an opportunity to show our Native American elders how important they are to our tribal communities. The drawings will be used as dinner placemats during a World Elder Abuse Awareness Day event being held on the University of North Dakota campus in Grand Forks on June 15, 2015.

