

# Working Together to Improve Individual Cardiovascular Health



## Programs Summary

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP) emphasizes the importance of funded programs and encourages collaborations among them. Two notable examples are the Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for WOMen Across the Nation (WISEWOMAN) program and the Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country (GHWIC) program. The WISEWOMAN program provides low-income, uninsured and underinsured women ages 40 to 64 with screenings for heart disease and stroke risk factors and refers them to healthy behavior services. GHWIC, CDC's largest investment to improve the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives, supports culturally tailored policy, systems, and environmental approaches to reduce chronic disease across Indian Country.

## Opportunity

The Red Cliff Community Health Center, a GHWIC grantee in rural Red Cliff, Wisconsin, serves all people in the surrounding Bayfield County area but specializes in care for American Indians. During a site visit, the GHWIC project officer determined that the health center was eligible for CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program and could collaborate with the Wisconsin WISEWOMAN program, benefiting both the health center and the women it serves.

## Collaboration

The Red Cliff Community Health Center and the Wisconsin WISEWOMAN program were excited to collaborate. Initial calls revealed challenges and opportunities for the state program to connect with tribes in Wisconsin. Challenges included the lack of staff capacity or infrastructure to follow up screenings with clinical and behavioral support, administrative issues, staff turnover, and the perception that Red Cliff was already providing WISEWOMAN



Glass plaque displayed at the Red Cliff Community Health Center

(or similar) services. Despite these challenges, the grantees discussed the mutual benefits of collaboration on an initial call.

*“Our work with Red Cliff has allowed us to experience real-life challenges and successes in assimilating two CDC cardiovascular disease control programs in a tribal clinic.”*

—Maebe Brown, Wisconsin WISEWOMAN program coordinator

## Sustaining Success

An assessment of Red Cliff’s capacity to deliver the WISEWOMAN program was completed in August 2017. Program funding and contracts have been approved and are in place. The Red Cliff Community Health Center has completed the WISEWOMAN program implementation training, including motivational interviewing training. Although the connection made between the Wisconsin WISEWOMAN program and the Red Cliff Community Health Center is in the initial phase, the program and the center are eager to make this collaboration successful and sustainable in both health systems interventions and community–clinical links.

Collaborations like this one can expand the collective impact of CDC-funded programs across a state to improve cardiovascular health.



CDC colleagues attending a traditional Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa ceremony symbolizing collaboration

## Collaboration facilitators should:

- Look for demographic, geographic, and programmatic alignment in their state that makes sense for both programs.
- Make sure to have timely follow-up and communication with other collaboration facilitators.
- Gauge interest by having separate discussions with each program about the opportunity to collaborate (all collaboration facilitators should be present if possible).
- Join the initial call to introduce the programs and continue to attend additional meetings early on in the collaboration.
- Check in with each program separately and then help interested programs as needed.
- Work with both programs to showcase successful health outcomes in their priority populations through data collection and evaluation.

## Additional Information

For more information about Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/tribal/factsheet.htm>.

For more information about the WISEWOMAN program, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/wisewoman>.

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