

Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists

2005 Conference Abstract:

Occupational Health Needs Assessment among Tribes in New Mexico

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Native Americans and their business enterprises are major components of the New Mexican economy. According to the 1997 Minority and Women-owned Business Survey, US Census Bureau, 7,000 businesses in New Mexico are owned by tribal membersⁱ. According to analysis of US Census Bureauⁱⁱ industry and occupational employment data over 4,000 Native American males were employed in the construction industry in 2000 making construction the number one employer of this population. Construction is also one of the top industries for occupational-injury mortality among Native Americans in NMⁱⁱⁱ. The Arts, Entertainment and Recreation industry is also a major employer of Native Americans in New Mexico, with several tribes having over 15% of their enrolled membership employed in the industry and is consistently in the top 10 for non-fatal occupational illness and injury in New Mexico from 1999-2002.

In an effort to increase the knowledge base of occupational illness and injury of New Mexico's Native American populations and of establishing viable working relationships with tribal entities, the New Mexico Occupational Health Registry conducted an occupational health needs assessment. The presentation plans to:

- summarize methods applied to conduct the needs assessment project, including the forging of collaborations and partnerships with sovereign tribal entities,
- discusses the results of a survey distributed to health and safety professionals working with tribes,

- provide conclusions and recommendations on the needs assessment approach for building coalitions for occupational health surveillance, and
- describe possible avenues for intervention for prevention among Native American communities.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 1997 Economic Census: Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses - New Mexico. <http://www.census.gov/epcd/mwb97/nm/NM.html>

ⁱⁱ U.S. Census Bureau. American Fact Finder. Census 2000 American Indian and Alaska Native Summary File (AIANSF) - Sample Data. http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

ⁱⁱⁱ Mulloy K., Moraga-McHale S., Voorhees R. Occupational Injury Mortality in New Mexico 1998-2002. Presentation for the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists Annual Conference, Boise ID, June, 2004.