



Social Determinants of Health and Suicide/Other Health Outcomes among American Indian/Alaska Native Populations

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Snapshot: American Indians and Alaska Natives¹

- As of 2019: estimated 5.7 million people classified as American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) alone or in combination comprising 1.7 percent of the total U.S. population.
 - Seventy-eight (78) percent live outside tribal areas
 - Twenty-two (22) percent live on reservations/trust lands
 - Sixty (60) percent live in metropolitan areas
- States with the largest populations include: Arizona, California, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, North Carolina, Alaska, Washington, South Dakota and New York.
- Currently, there are 574 federally recognized Tribes and more than 100 state recognized Tribes.

American Indian/Alaska Native Population and Veteran Status²

- U.S. Veteran Population: 18 Million
- U.S. Federally Recognized Tribes: 574
- U.S. AI/AN Veteran Population: 150,000
- AI/AN Veterans were 88.3% men and 11.7% women.
- AI/AN Veterans are more likely to live in the West region of the United States than Veterans of other races.
- AI/AN Veterans median age was 59 while the median age for Veterans of other races was 64.
- AI/AN Veterans had a lower personal income than Veterans of other races.
- AI/AN Veterans were likely to lack health insurance than Veterans of other races.
- AI/AN Veterans were more likely to have a Service Connected Disability than Veterans of other races.

American Indian/Alaska Native Population and Disparities¹

- AI/AN people have a lower life expectancy that is 78.4 years whereas for non-Hispanic White the projected life expectancy is 80.6 years.
- Issues impacting life expectancy:
 - Disproportionate disease burden
 - Inadequate education
 - Disproportionate poverty
 - Discrimination
 - Racism
 - Cultural differences
 - Economic adversity
 - Poor social conditions

American Indian/Alaska Native Population and Mortality Rates³

	AI/AN Rates 2009-2011	U.S. All Rates Rate – 2010	Ratio AI/AN to U.S. All Races
All Causes	999.1	747.0	1.3
Diseases of the heart (Heart Disease)	194.7	179.1	1.1
Malignant neoplasm (cancer)	178.4	172.8	1.0
Accidents (unintentional injuries)*	93.7	38.0	2.5
Diabetes mellitus (diabetes)	66.0	20.8	3.2
Alcohol-induced	50.0	7.6	6.6
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	46.6	42.2	1.1
Cerebrovascular diseases (stroke)	43.6	39.1	1.1
Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	42.9	9.4	4.6
Influenza and pneumonia	26.6	15.1	1.8
Drug-induced	23.4	15.3	1.5

American Indian/Alaska Native Population and Suicide⁴

- In 2017, suicide was the 8th leading cause of death for all AI/AN across all ages.
- 3,447 deaths in the AI/AN population
 - 18% (640) deaths by suicide
 - 46.6% by Suffocation
 - 38.6% by Firearm
- Most stigmatized mental health related problems reported by AI/AN communities:
 - HIV/AIDS
 - **Suicide**
 - Mental Illness
 - Sexual Assault
- AI/AN people die by suicide at higher rates than other races or ethnic groups, especially for youth.

American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans and Suicide^{5,6}

- Age-adjusted suicide rates among AI/AN Veterans in cohort over 15 year period (2014-2018) more than doubled (19.1 – 47.0/100,000) with the youngest age group (18-39) exhibiting the highest suicide rate.
- Suicide is an increasing problem among AI/AN VHA Veterans.
- Younger AI/AN Veterans are at particularly high risk and warrant focused prevention efforts.
- AI/AN Veterans have more than twice the risk of suicide ideation relative to Non-Hispanic White Veterans.

Meeting the needs of American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans

- Outreach
- Inclusion of Traditional Healers and Traditional Practices
- Continuum of Care
- Assistance in understanding VHA and the interplay between VA and IHS
- Representation
- Peer Support Providers
- Assistance with benefits and service connection



Question & Answer

References

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