Cherokee, NC

Cherokee is located at the base of the Smoky Mountains National Park between Swain, Jackson, and Haywood Counties

Culture and Community

- 14,500 members are enrolled in the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- Story-telling, basket-weaving, and language are important parts of the Cherokee culture
- Today, a blend of both Cherokee and Southern Cultures can be seen within the Qualla Boundary

Cherokee Indian Hospital (CIH)

- CIH Guiding Principle: -Ni hi tsa tse li “It belongs to you”
- CIH was formed in 2002 and is fully funded by the ECBI and Harrah’s Casino –located in Cherokee, NC
- The hospital was consciously designed to integrate aspects of Cherokee culture into the architecture and interior design

Specific Health Concerns in Cherokee

- Type 2 Diabetes - Rate is 2.6 x higher than the state
- Obesity - Approximately 80% of the population is overweight or obese
- Nutrition - 17 of 25 restaurants in Cherokee serve fast food
- Drug Dependence - Analenisgi and Kanwotiyi
- Hepatitis C
- Domestic Violence

The Domestic Violence Problem

- More than 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native women (84.3 percent) have experienced violence in their lifetime
- This includes: sexual violence, physical violence by an intimate partner, stalking, and psychological aggression by an intimate partner
- 66.5 percent of women and 26.0 percent of men were concerned for their safety.
- 49.0 percent of women and 19.9 percent of men needed services because of what the perpetrators did

History of Domestic Violence in Native American Communities

1978 Supreme Court Case “Oliphant vs Suquamish Indian Tribe”
- Stated Indian tribes have no legal jurisdiction to prosecute non-Indians who commit crimes on reservations
- No recourse for perpetrators that were white and not enrolled in the tribe
- This created a safe haven for non-tribal criminals and allowed domestic violence to persist for generations

VAWA Amendment – 2013
- Amendment finally introduced that allows tribal courts to prosecute non-Indians who commit crimes on reservations
- However, limitations remain
  - Civil charges vs criminal charges
  - Lack of tribal court jurisdiction over crimes against children, law enforcement personnel, and sexual assault crimes committed by strangers

Obstacles Facing Victims of DV in Cherokee

- Cultural Stigma
- Connection to the community and one another on the reservation makes reporting difficult
- Little Domestic Violence education on the reservation
- Leaving the reservation may be difficult for some

Project

Issue: CIH lacked a comprehensive Domestic Violence resource. Both patients and providers within the hospital were unaware of most local domestic violence shelters and what services each location provided

Future Directions

- Local shelters plan to engage in outreach events and community education on domestic violence to destigmatize the issue and raise awareness
- Plans to partner with local law enforcement, court system, and police department to better the training on handling of domestic violence cases and create a more efficient court process

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- Amanda Greene
- Dr. Benjamin Gilmer

Source: Rosay, André B. VIOLENCE AGAINST AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN AND MEN. 2016, pp. 1–82, VIOLENCE AGAINST AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN AND MEN.

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