



NEWS RELEASE

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New Report Will Assist Department of Health with Health Disparity Efforts

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) recently received a report from the Mountain States Regional Health Equity Council (RHEC), Region VIII, that identifies barriers to health and social support systems that low-income and minority populations experience in the region, including North Dakota. The report notes in particular that for the 439,000 Native Americans who live in the region, access to health care and the prevalence of chronic illness creates health disparities that must be addressed by states in order to close the gaps in health care.

“The North Dakota Department of Health will use the data in this Blueprint for Action to guide us in pursuing policies and procedures that help provide better access to health care and social support for those communities that currently suffer from disparities,” according to Phyllis Howard, Director of the NDDoH Health Equity Office. “Once we know where the gaps are, we can start to fill them,” added Howard.

Key findings for North Dakota indicate:

- Rates of death from all causes and from cancer specifically are two times higher for American Indians than for whites
- Unintentional injuries and diabetes-related causes are respectively three and a half and four times higher for American Indians than for whites
- The portion of the American Indian population that smokes is more than twice that of the white population
- Rates of physical activity, health screening and insurance coverage are lower in the American Indian population as compared to the white population

To view the blueprint and learn more about RHEC, visit <http://www.ndhealth.gov/heo/>. For more information, contact Phyllis Howard at 701.328.2439 a member of Region VIII RHEC Council.

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