



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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Contact: Joanne Gallivan  
301-496-6110

**National Diabetes Education Program Tailors  
Cardiovascular Disease Message for  
American Indians and Alaska Natives**

DENVER – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) is introducing new materials tailored for American Indians and Alaska Natives, “Take Care of Your Heart: Manage Your Diabetes for Future Generations.” The materials, adapted from NDEP’s nationwide *Be Smart About Your Heart* campaign, promote the message that American Indian and Alaska Natives with diabetes can reduce their risk of a heart attack and stroke if they take care of their heart and manage their diabetes by controlling their blood glucose (sugar), blood pressure, and cholesterol. American Indian and Alaska Natives are more than twice as likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites of similar age. Two out of three Americans with diabetes die of heart disease or stroke and high blood pressure. High cholesterol, current cigarette smoking, and obesity raise the risk of cardiovascular disease even higher.

Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, Chair of NDEP’s American Indians and Alaska Natives Work Group and former president of the Association of American Indian Physicians, led the development of the campaign. “We need to let our communities know that we can fight back against diabetes and cardiovascular disease. We can live long and healthy lives by managing our diabetes and reducing our risk of a heart attack or stroke,” she said.

The campaign will be launched during the Indian Health Service’s (IHS) Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes among American Indians and Alaska Natives conference May 16-19 in Denver. Campaign materials include a motivational tip sheet empowering American Indian and Alaska Natives to keep track of their blood glucose (sugar), blood pressure, and cholesterol numbers. Promotional materials include a print PSA, and a small colorful poster.

“This campaign provides those hardest hit by this growing epidemic with consumer-friendly materials and practical advice to manage diabetes and its serious, deadly complications.” said Dr. James R. Gavin III, chair of the National Diabetes Education Program.

All people with diabetes should take action by asking their health care provider what their blood glucose (sugar), blood pressure and cholesterol numbers *are*, what they *should be*, and what *actions* they should take to reach those target numbers. Blood glucose (sugar), as measured by the A1C test, should be checked at least twice a year. Blood pressure should be checked at each visit and cholesterol should be tested at least once a year. For most people with diabetes, the goals are A1C below 7, blood pressure below 130/80, and LDL cholesterol below 100.

For more information about the campaign, including tip sheets, posters, and print ads, visit the NDEP website at [www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov). To order free copies of the materials, call 1-800-438-5383.

*The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Diabetes Education Program is jointly sponsored by the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Diabetes Translation. The program involves more than 200 public and private sector partners who work at the national, state, and local level.*

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