



# Anishinaabe/Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan's Steps Program

*Informing chronic disease prevention and health promotion initiatives*

## What is the public health problem?

American Indian Communities experience higher rates of chronic conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

- Although Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) surveys have been conducted in Michigan since 1988, health officials previously were not able to collect enough information from American Indians to derive meaningful data.
- In 2005 and 2006, the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan (ITCM) conducted BRFSS surveys in its American Indian Steps community. According to the 2006\* Steps BRFSS data,
  - More than 31% of respondents reported being overweight and about 38% reported being obese.
  - Nearly 20% reported having diabetes.
  - About 47% reported being physically inactive.
  - More than one-third reported that they smoke.

## How Steps is responding

The Steps Program helped inform chronic disease prevention and promotion activities by collecting this vital health behavior data.

- In 2005, the Anishinaabe Steps Program worked with the ITCM, a consortium of the state's 12 federally recognized tribes, to conduct BRFSS surveys specifically tailored for American Indian adults.

- Survey questions covered a range of topics including health care access, tobacco use, and preventive health screening practices in the American Indian population.

## What is the impact?

- Because the survey captured tribal-specific information—which never before existed in Michigan—tribal leaders can use the data to design and implement chronic disease prevention activities and provide support for policy and environmental changes.
- The results of the first survey provided baseline data about health conditions, risk behaviors, and screening practices in this population. For example, almost 17% of respondents said they had doctor-diagnosed diabetes, and more than half (57%) of those said they had taken a class on managing the condition.

## Why this program is working

Because the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention allows BRFSS questions to be modified or added to reflect local needs and concerns, the data collected by the ITCM can be used to effectively address the unique needs of the area's tribal communities.

\* Most recent data available