



**Toiyabe Indian Health Project**  
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**TOIYABE**  
INDIAN HEALTH PROJECT

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR RELEASE:**           **June 9, 2016**

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### **Tobacco Cessation is a Top Priority in Tribal Communities**

On May 3-4, 2016, 23 Tribal Health Clinic staff gathered at the Owens Valley Paiute-Shoshone Cultural Center in Bishop, CA to attend a two day workshop on Tobacco Cessation Facilitation, hosted by the Community Wellness Program at Toiyabe Indian Health Project (Toiyabe) and instructed by Lou Moerner, the Community Wellness Division Director for the Northern California Indian Development Council (NCIDC).

The workshop focused on two tobacco cessation curriculums: Second Wind and Kaiser Permanente's "Quit Smoking Workshop." Second Wind is a comprehensive approach to tobacco cessation tailored to Native American communities. The program when implemented consists of eight, 1-hour, weekly sessions. The "Quit Smoking Workshop" is a stand-alone program offered to clients who are in the contemplation/action stages of positive health behavior change. When implemented, the workshop is an interactive, three-hour session that will leave participants with a customized Quit Plan and action steps to implement toward a successful quit.

The participants of the workshop represented diverse roles from Tribal clinics and prevention programs from across California. Organizations represented included Toiyabe Indian Health Project, Big Pine Tribal TANF, Inyo County Health and Human Services, Round Valley Indian Health, Bakersfield American Indian Health Project, Wilton Rancheria, Riverside San Bernardino County Indian Health and Greenville Rancheria. Participants represented were Project Coordinators, Community Health Representatives, Youth Prevention Workers, Behavior Health Directors, and Medical Aides.

This training is the culminating step in the successful completion of an action plan developed in 2015 at the National Tobacco Prevention Institute, hosted by the Healthy Native Communities Partnership. At the Institute, staff from Toiyabe, California Rural Indian Health Board (CRIHB), and NCIDC collaborated to develop a tobacco cessation action plan for Toiyabe. The first step outlined in the action plan was to bring Chris Cooper and Julie Villa from CRIHB to Toiyabe to present on the importance of screening and referral in the clinic setting. Their presentation focused on the 5 A's (Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, Arrange Follow-up). Attending the training were staff from multiple Toiyabe departments, including Medical, Dental, Pharmacy, Behavior Health, and Public Health. "It was important to educate and get buy-in from across all

departments,” said Serena Johnson, Project Coordinator at Toiyabe. “Tobacco Prevention is successful when the whole clinic and community understand the challenges and steps to success.”

The second step in the action plan was to host a training for staff in tobacco cessation. The training was a success due to strong partnerships between Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) awardees and Tribal clinics. CRIHB is a recipient of the CDC grant Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country, and Toiyabe is a recipient of the CDC grant Partnerships to Improve Community Health. By partnering and supporting each other’s efforts in tobacco prevention, our project scope increased and reached across the state. Both Toiyabe and CRIHB promoted the workshop to their project partners cultivated through their grant work. CRIHB supported other Tribes and Tribal health programs in California to attend the training through their Advancing California Opportunities for Renewing Native Health Systems (ACORNS) Program. “The smoking rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives in California is the highest of all ethnicities in California,” said Chris Cooper, Health Education Specialist with CRIHB. “We are dedicated to assisting tribes in developing healthy communities, and one of those ways is giving them the capacity to offer cessation programs to their members.”

Lou Moerner saw the effect from this partnership most acutely, “I came to Bishop in 2005 and presented on Second Wind cessation program, and only had five people at the training. Now ten years later, the fact that I presented to 23 people shows the success of this partnership and the importance of offering tobacco cessation to our Native Communities.”

One month after the workshop, many of the Tribal clinics are already making great strides in planning and setting up tobacco cessation programs. At Toiyabe, staff are planning to implement the Kaiser Permanente “Quit Smoking Workshop” once a month starting in June 2016. Planning activities include coordinating with departments and providers to plan how to refer patients to the program, and promoting the workshop to partner Tribal agencies.

The mission of Toiyabe Indian Health Project is to improve and establish programs, policies and actions which focus on developing and maintaining healthy individuals, families and Indian communities. More information on the Toiyabe Community Wellness Program can be found at <http://www.toiyabe.us/>. This workshop and activities were made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

*Photo caption: In May, 2016 twenty-three Tribal Health Clinic staff gathered in Bishop, California to attend a two day workshop on Tobacco Cessation.*



*Photo caption: Staff from Toiyabe Indian Health Project, California Rural Indian Health Board, and Northern California Indian Development Council collaborated to develop a tobacco cessation action plan for Toiyabe at the National Tobacco Prevention Institute in July 2015.*

