Letter from the Alaska Native Tumor Registry Director

Hello and welcome to this issue of the ANTR Newsletter,

We hope that this newsletter reaches you in good health. We at ANTR are looking forward to settling in for the winter after a very busy summer! This fall brought many changes to our department, one of which was a big transition for us, with the retirement of long-time tumor registrar Teri Schade.

After 10.5 years with the registry, our team said goodbye to Teri, who decided to spend more time with her grandkids and pursue other interests.

Collection of cancer surveillance data for 2018 cases has been a big challenge for registries across the country, as the national professional organizations implemented new rules for the coding of certain data items. Between release of the changes, and delayed updates to the data collection software, it has been a challenge to keep up with data collection efforts this year. But we are pleased to say that, with your support, we are on track with our collection of 2018 data! Our final submission for these data will be in November 2020, so please keep an eye out in your inbox for emails pertaining to any questions we may have about potential 2018 cancer cases.

Finally, I wanted to share with you how we have been sharing the data that we collect on behalf of Alaska Native people. In June, I travelled to Fairbanks to participate in a community health fair, and a provider “Lunch and Learn”. See photos on page 3. We had a real blast sharing our data with the great people at Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), and participating in activities to promote cancer screening.

As always, I hope that you find this newsletter interesting and informative. Please let us know if there’s anything you’d like to see in the next edition. And of course, please feel free to share this with any Tribal and/or community-health partner that might be interested. We’d like to thank YOU for your support in the collection of 2018 data thus far.

In health,
Sarah
Registry Update:

Thank you for your help in making the 2017 data collection successful! We met our completeness goals and successfully completed our November 2019 submission to the SEER Program. Check your inbox for some potential changes that may benefit you in the upcoming year, including an even closer partnership with the Alaska Cancer Registry.

ANTR in the Community

Earlier this year, ANTR embarked on a project in response to a request from Tanana Chief’s Conference (TCC). TCC asked us if there were any data on the proportion of Alaska Native people that might expect to receive a cancer diagnosis during the course of their lifetime. These data are available from the National Cancer Institute for American Indian Alaska Native people, but had never before been calculated for Alaska Native people specifically. So, we undertook the project to generate these data, for TCC, and for AN people statewide. The result was a rack card with infographics, which combines the data with information about cancer prevention.

One of the highlights of the summer, Sarah was able to take these rack cards, along with a collection of other information items, to a health fair hosted by TCC in Fairbanks. She and Diana Redwood, also from ANTHC, donned polyp costumes and ran the charity 5k organized alongside the health fair in an attempt to raise awareness of colorectal cancer screening. The following day, Sarah and Diana were able to share more information with TCC clinicians in a “Lunch and Learn”.

Sharing our data with the community in this way is one of our favorite ways to give back to those facilities that support us in ANTHC’s vision that Alaska Native people are the healthiest in the world. Please let us know if you have an event you’d like us to speak at or support.
Data Use

The ANTR has been busy this year! Here are some of the different ways that we’ve been using the data that you’ve helped us collect to improve Alaska Native health:

- We published a peer-reviewed manuscript on breast cancer among Alaska Native women, with colleagues from ANTHC and ANMC. This paper is the first to examine women's cancers among Alaska Native women in over ten years. Nash et al International Journal of Circumpolar Health 2019. (tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/22423982.2019.1633190?needAccess=true)

- We supported at least two tribal grant applications for topics related to cancer and cancer screening.

- We supported, and presented at, a fantastic meeting on gastric cancer among Alaska Native people. This highly successful meeting, held at ANTHC in July, brought experts from throughout Alaska, and across the globe, to discuss why Alaska Native people might have high rates of gastric cancer, and what we can do about it.

- We also published a paper that reviews cancer incidence, as well as risk and protective factors for cancer in the Alaska Education and Research Towards Health (EARTH) study. (link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10552-019-01216-9)

Did You Know?

The Alaska Native Tumor Registry is housed within ANTHC’s Alaska Native Epidemiology Center (EpiCenter), one of 12 Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TECs) nationwide. It is part of the TECs’ mission to make public health information available to its tribal partners. The EpiCenter is your go-to resource for data on a wide variety of topics, including cancer. Examples of summary data that the EpiCenter can provide include: The Alaska Trauma Registry, Hospital Discharge Data, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Pregnancy Risk Assessment, Monitoring System, Infectious Disease Surveillance, and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

Services provided by the EpiCenter include responding to data requests, technical assistance and training, and providing data directly on our website through factsheets. If you, or anyone in your organization, is looking for data or data-related technical assistance, please share our contact information with them.

anthctoday.org/epicenter  •  (907) 729-4567  •  anepicenter@anthc.org

50 Year Report

ANTR will be creating and publishing the 50 year report on cancer among Alaska Native people in 2020! We’ve heard from several partners on things they found most useful about the 45 year report, and things they’d like to see in the 50 year report.

If you have any additional thoughts to share, please send them to antr@anthc.org.
Have You Seen Our Website?

Alaska Native Epidemiology Center

The Alaska Native Tumor Registry (ANTR) is a collection of cancer information going back to 1949 on all Alaska Native and American Indian individuals living in Alaska at the time of their diagnosis. The mission of the ANTR is to contribute to the wellness of Alaska Native people by collecting, analyzing, and disseminating cancer information.

The Alaska Native Tumor Registry: An Introduction

Want to receive our newsletter via email? Contact us at antr@anthc.org to be added to our newsletter email list.

Remember, you can find all of our cancer-related reports and factsheets online at anthctoday.org/epicenter/antr.html