Letter from the Alaska Native Tumor Registry Director

Hello and welcome!

I’m excited to present the inaugural Alaska Native Tumor Registry (ANTR) newsletter. The idea for this newsletter came from YOU–our community partners—who suggested it would be a great way for ANTR to reach out to our partners across the state, give news updates, and inform you about the work that we are doing to address Alaska Native cancer concerns.

Cancer is the leading cause of death and a leading cause of illness among Alaska Native people. But the good news is that there are many ways to address the cancer burden. The data that you help ANTR collect are a critical piece of the cancer prevention and control puzzle.

For example, the data collected over the past years tell us that Alaska Native people have among the highest rates of colorectal cancer in the world; rates that are over two times higher than those observed for US whites. Alaska Native people also appear to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer at a younger age than US whites. In response, the Alaska Native Medical Center lowered the recommended age to begin screening to 40 years old—ten years younger than the national recommendation—and encourages screening among Alaska Native family members of those with colorectal cancer. Several tribal health organizations statewide have also implemented similar programs and policies. ANTHC has also started several research studies to identify and address colorectal cancer risk factors, as well as improve screening. We hope that we will begin to see the effects of these combined efforts soon.

This is just one example of how the data that you help us collect are changing the lives of Alaska Native people. Since joining the ANTR in 2015, I have continuously been impressed by the commitment of the ANTR staff, and all of our statewide partners, to providing the best cancer data possible for the benefit of Alaska Native people. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of you for your hard work and dedication to this effort.

I hope this newsletter is interesting and useful to you. Please let us know if there is anything you would like to see in future editions. Please feel free to circulate this information to your tribal- and community-health partners who may be interested.

Sincerely,

Sarah Nash, ANTR Director
In order to complete our casefinding, we have to find cases from throughout the state. We are just about done with 2016, and currently have collected information on 496 cases. Many thanks to the facilities that work with us to make this happen. We will begin casefinding for 2017 soon, so expect to see requests for information hitting your inbox next month!
Cancer Data Use

The map below shows the number of cases we have collected from each region from 2014 through 2016. The number of cases we collect varies by region, as well as by year.

We hope you find this information interesting. Let us know if there is something in our data that you would like us to highlight in the next newsletter.

Frequency of Cancer Diagnoses Among Alaska Natives, by Tribal Health Region, 2014-2016

Notes

Tribal Health Regions are approximated using boroughs and Census Areas (Carmack et al. 2015:143–144).

* Data for the Aleutians and Pribilofs in 2016 have been redacted to protect patient privacy.

Sources

Frequency data from Alaska Native Tumor Registry, accessed December, 2017.


Your Voice: Highlighting How You Use ANTR Data

Catherine DeAngelis at Norton Sound Health Corporation tells us how much she enjoyed our 45-Year Report’s Executive Summary:

“We have been asked by our patients, ‘How do cancer rates in our region compare to those in other areas of Alaska?’ This brochure answers that question in a way that is easily understood and easily visualized. The addition of the Alaska Native art work promotes a feeling of ‘our culture’ with the statistical information. And... the geese on the front cover is a perfect selection. It is visually recognizable and ties everything back to ANMC, to our regional health care.”

– Catherine DeAngelis, Manager of Radiology, NSHC

Do you have a story to share? We’d love to feature YOU and how you use ANTR data in your programs.
Contact Us

Have a question about the ANTR or the work that we do? Want to let us know about a new staff member that has joined your team? Have a request for data, presentation, or assistance? Contact us!

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