

YAHGHELI CH'TSIZLAN

WE ARE GETTING

Healthier

FIGHTING CANCER

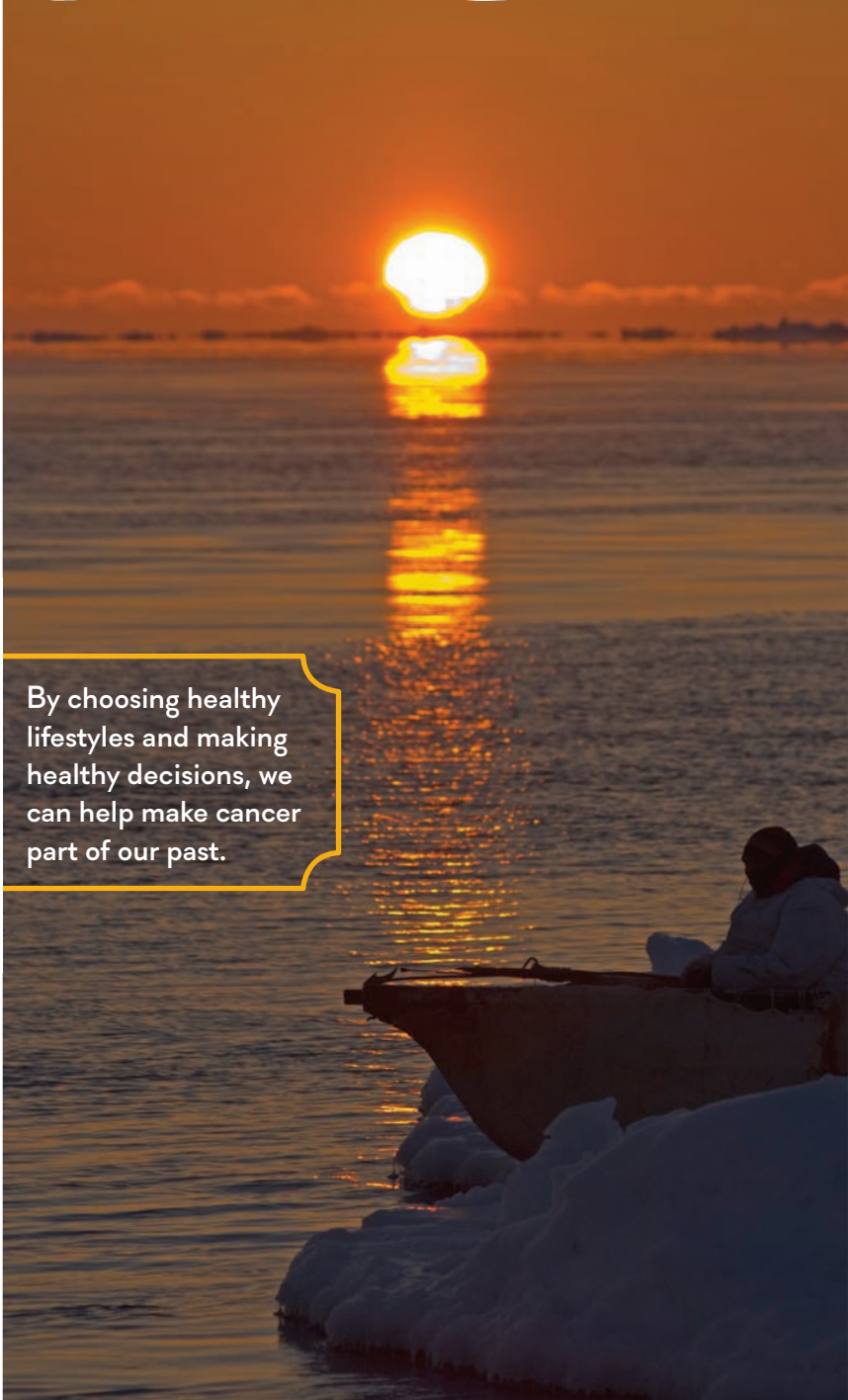
Alaska Native people are making great strides against cancer by practicing more traditional ways, engaging in physical activities, making smarter eating choices, and taking our health care seriously. Healthy lifestyles and getting regular screenings can make the difference in fighting cancer before it becomes life-threatening.

Our people are living proof of that. Alaska Native women once had high rates of cervical cancer, but we have reversed that trend. By balancing healthy lifestyles and being seen for screenings and exams, our mothers, wives, aunties and daughters are living healthier, just like our ancestors once did.

For many generations, cancer was considered a very rare disease among Alaska Native people. Today, cancer is the leading cause of death for our people. In fact, Alaska Native people often have higher rates of lung, colon, kidney, stomach and other digestive system cancers than national averages.

Cancer is not just one disease – it is actually more than 100 different diseases with many different causes. Cancers can grow and divide rapidly, robbing nutrients from healthy cells in our bodies. Cancers are often named after the organ or cells where they first start to grow, and they may spread to other parts of the body. The sooner cancer is found, the more likely it can be treated.

Fighting and preventing cancer is a long journey, but by making healthy decisions, our people can make cancer a part of our past.

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange glow and a long, shimmering reflection on the water's surface. In the foreground, a person is sitting in a small boat, partially obscured by a large, white, snow-covered log or piece of driftwood. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

By choosing healthy lifestyles and making healthy decisions, we can help make cancer part of our past.

Life is gifted to you. What you make of it is your gift in return. – Unangan/Unangas Value

Our cancer **SUCCESSES**



PAST

In the early 1980s, Alaska Native women suffered from cervical cancer at a rate **three times higher** than the national average.

RAISED AWARENESS,
INCREASED SCREENINGS
AND HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES

3X

LOWER
cervical cancer rate

We are getting healthier!



PRESENT

By the mid-2000s the rate of cervical cancer among Alaska Native women **was cut by two-thirds!**

EARLY DETECTION TIPS FROM A PRO: Marie Paul, CHA/P



As a Community Health Aide/Practitioner (CHA/P), Marie Paul knows she plays an important role in providing cancer education to people, whether it's in one-on-one consultations or in community presentations.

Paul works for the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation in Togiak, where she educates people about different types of cancer, the importance of

“Learning about cancer education has given me confidence on what I am saying to individuals around the community. I am not guessing, but giving facts.”

screenings for men and women, and much more. She gets to see the positive impact of her work every day.

“After one of my presentations for an all-male crowd, one of the guys was encouraged to make an appointment and get a lump on his back checked out by his provider,” said Paul.

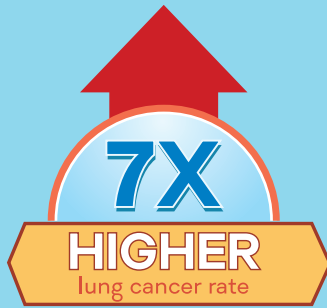
Paul takes the extra steps to relate to her audiences, as well.

“An important step I took was to overcome my fear of a colonoscopy and went through the procedure myself,” she said. “Now, I can tell folks that it is really not that scary.”

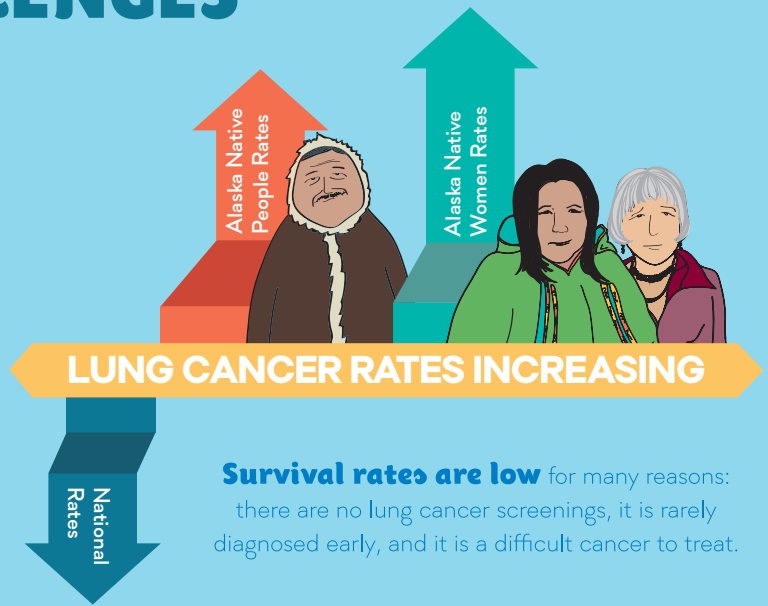
By balancing those personal experiences with her medical knowledge, Paul is effective in making connections that truly reach the people in the communities she serves.

“Attending and learning about cancer education has given me confidence on what I am saying to individuals – I am giving facts,” she explained. “When I give community presentations, those facts are given, but activities like making necklaces are also great tools to let folks know the importance of self-care, doing self-exams regularly, and receiving regular exams from providers.”

Our present CHALLENGES



From the early 1970s to the late 2000s, Alaska Native people have seen lung cancer rates increase by more than seven times.



Survival rates are low for many reasons: there are no lung cancer screenings, it is rarely diagnosed early, and it is a difficult cancer to treat.

Cancer Risk Factors:

Don't gamble with your health



We are responsible for each other and ourselves.

– Kodiak Alutiiq Value

LEARN MORE:

For more information about cancer prevention and treatment, visit or contact the following:

ANTHC Cancer Program:
cancer@anthc.org

Cancer Education for Community Health Aides in Alaska: www.akchap.org

American Cancer Society:
www.cancer.org

Native C.I.R.C.L.E.:
www.cancercenter.mayo.edu/native_circle.cfm

ANTHC EpiCenter:
anthctoday.org/epicenter/colon

Cancer Fighters

More than half of cancer deaths could be prevented by making healthy choices! Here are just a few ways you can stay healthy:

EAT HEALTHY FOODS



Good nutrition is one key to good health. Traditional foods, fruits and bright colored vegetables are high in fiber and packed with vitamins and nutrients.

BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE



Regular exercise, drinking lots of water, and avoiding tobacco will help you lower your risk for certain cancers.

GET REGULAR SCREENINGS



Having recommended screenings helps to find cancer early when it can best be treated. Talk to your provider about what screenings are right for you.

Healthy Recipe: Venison Skewers with Foraged Vegetable Saute and Blueberry Spruce Tip Vinaigrette

As hunters around Alaska know well, deer meat is an excellent source of protein and iron. Consider serving with a side of vegetable saute featuring fiddlehead ferns, which provide fiber and Vitamins A and C, as well as texture and natural flavors.



MARINADE:

- 1/4 cup seal or olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon spruce tips, shredded
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

SKEWERS:

- 1-2 pounds venison, sliced into cubes
- 2 red bell peppers, sliced into cubes
- 1-2 onions, sliced into wedges
- 2-3 zucchinis, sliced into rings
- 1 package wood skewers, soaked in water

INSTRUCTIONS:

Skewers/Marinade: Combine marinade ingredients in small bowl. Marinate the meat for one hour prior to cooking. Add around four pieces of meat to each skewer along with onion, pepper and zucchini pieces.

Vinaigrette: Bring water to boil and add berries, spruce tips and vinegar. Let cool.

Saute: In medium pan, add oil and fiddleheads over medium heat. Saute for one minute. Season with salt and set aside. Serve meal over brown rice.

VEGETABLE SAUTE:

- 1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil
- 1/4 cup fiddlehead ferns
- 2 tablespoons skunk cabbage shoots
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

VINAIGRETTE:

- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tablespoon spruce tips
- 1/4 cup harvested blueberries
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey, if needed

For more recipes featuring traditional and cancer-fighting foods, purchase the "Traditional Food Guide for Alaska Native Cancer Survivors" at www.anthc.org/chs/crs/foodguide.cfm.



ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM