

Diabetes among Indigenous Tribes within Washington State is increasing at a surprisingly high rate. Diabetes within Tribal populations are rather deep and historical, issues. These issues are not just historical, but they are also socio-economical and cultural issues. Issues like this require immediate interventions to help save Tribal populations from becoming extinct.

There was one interview with an individual who explained that Indigenous children who attended boarding schools for Native Americans given meals that provided little to no calories or nutritional value, providing children with a minimum of 1,000-1,200 daily calories per day. The food that was being fed to the students of Tribal Nations was primarily food that was intended for horses, pigs, chickens, and other livestock.

Upon the abandonment of Tribal boarding school which are cruel and inhumane the children, many of them, were faced extremely severe and life-threatening malnourishment. These students were also face with resistance to insulin, which contributed to factors in obesity, though food insecurity was also a factor in obesity as well. Many Tribal Nations have and do face many different types of barriers that lead the the inability to accurately and culturally receive the foods that are needed for survival. Even with all of these barriers, Tribal Nations have banded together to organize something called, Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS). IFS is a program that primarily helps with the appropriate access to. significant foods that are culturally relevant. There have been reports that substance abuse like binge drinking, and other non-recreational substances are relatively high among Indigenous members. Though, research suggests that it is really no higher than whites, Latinos, and other minorities. Though, there is a shortage of professionals that specialize in relationships with Tribal Nations. Given this issue, the reason the reports are so high is because tribal members hesitate to seek treatment. They are scarred by memories of the mistreatment that took place within boarding schools for Native Americans. Tribal members, therefore, struggle silently due to the lacking support.

After taking into consideration these challenges, it is imperative that we learn, and debate and challenge the state and senate to prioritize the health and well-being of Tribal Nations, especially in Washington State. There is one Tribal clinic in Puyallup called the Puyallup Tribal Health Authority, which is for all Tribal Members, of each tribe in the entire Nation who are located within the state of Washington. By taking the steps to acknowledge and address these issues contributing to the increasing number of diabetic, malnourished, and substance users, collaboratively we can aim towards creating meaningful and positive changes. These changes will pay tribute to a faith effort to show we as citizens of Washington are committed to equity and justice, so that we can create a healthier, more inclusive future for all Native Americans.