



Native American Elders Diagnosed with Cancer: **Transportation and Financial Resources**



Laurie Cropley
Tlingit-Raven Clan
Diagnosed:
1992 stomach
cancer

What is this issue?

Being able to get resources that you need may improve your:

- 🪸 **likelihood of surviving cancer**
- 🪸 **quality of life (being able to do what you enjoy doing spiritually, physically, mentally, and socially)**

What are the problems or issues related to Financial Resources?

- 🪸 Native American elder cancer patients are unlikely to be referred to quality cancer care
- 🪸 It is important to get into Western medical care for your cancer in a timely manner. You can combine Western medicine with traditional Indian medicine!
- 🪸 Indian Health Service (IHS), Tribal, and Urban Indian programs rarely have enough money to pay for elder cancer patient care
- 🪸 Less than one out of every three Native elder cancer patients has private health insurance
- 🪸 Lack of private health insurance is likely to hurt your ability to get quality care
- 🪸 More than half of elder Native cancer patients have problems getting help from Medicare

What did elder Native patients say about this issue?

- 🍷 We don't have a lot of money, we don't have a lot of time and we're dependent on services.*
- 🍷 I did not have health insurance so I had to go to my home reservation ... for treatment...I had to leave my family and go there.*
- 🍷 When you don't have insurance and can't get help you get mad and frustrated.*
- 🍷 People in the urban area have to go home to get their treatment and ...then we have to live back there at least 6 months to re-establish residency.*
- 🍷 My sister...thought she had good insurance, but it was terrible insurance. We had to go through several hoops to get her treatment.*
- 🍷 I blamed IHS for not doing x-rays, follow up and not listening to her.*
- 🍷 ...When I had to have my cancer I did not have health insurance so I had to go to my home reservation ... and have my treatment done there because that is where my health contract is. So I had to leave my family and go there. As everybody has said, we don't want to be alone ... it wasn't very much fun. (4-21-06)*
- 🍷 ...just like in our area, they have a mobile mammogram clinic, the RV that comes out into rural communities. Even though it came into our area, it was 75 miles away. Only those people who had ... transportation, which is probably 25% of the women probably had a chance to go in. It's in the area from 10a to 4pm in the afternoon, and they are moving on ... [ed. Providers] don't want to spend the night in some little place where the tumbleweeds are blowing by. (4-4-06)*
- 🍷 ...I am lucky I have insurance, health insurance. A lot of people don't and they are not privy to some of the treatments that are available. They are limited to what they can pay for or what Medicare can pay for. There are restrictions or limits and if it's outside of or above what I am willing to pay, then they're not going to recommend them. So people are going to get mad, and frustrated and then they are not going to do anything. Yes, that's what's frustrating for me, the lack of resources. (4-4-06)*

What are Unique Issues affecting Elder Native American Cancer Patients?



- 🍷 IHS is unable to take care of all of your cancer care needs*
- 🍷 Indians are eligible for other government programs, like Medicare, but the Medicare staff frequently say Natives must only use IHS.*
- 🍷 Elders should seek medical care because most people do not die of the cancer.*
- 🍷 Even though you've been diagnosed with cancer, you still need to take part in screening check-ups, like a mammogram.*


What are some Resources?

- 🗑️ Air Care Alliance
 - ☎️ 888-260-9707; www.aircareall.org
 - ✍️ A nationwide league of flying organizations whose volunteer pilots are dedicated to community service, including flying for health care, patient transport,
- 🗑️ Cancer Care, Inc.
 - ☎️ 800-813-4673; www.cancercare.org
 - ✍️ helping patients and families with financial assistance, counseling, and transportation for home care.
- 🗑️ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ([Medicaid](#))
 - ☎️ 866-226-1819; 800-633-4227;
www.cms.hhs.gov/home/medicaid.asp
 - ✍️ For people who are permanently disabled
 - ✍️ Financial assistance for medical expenses
- 🗑️ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ([Medicare](#))
 - ☎️ 800-772-1213; 800-633-4227; www.medicare.gov
 - ✍️ For people over 65 ; Local services, including doctors and prescription drug assistance.
- 🗑️ Corporate Angel, Inc.
 - ☎️ 866-328-1313; www.corpangelnetwork.org
 - ✍️ A service that matches available space on corporate airplanes with cancer patients in need of transportation to recognized treatment centers.
- 🗑️ Mary-Helen Mautner Project for Lesbians with Cancer
 - ☎️ 1-866-628-8637; www.mautnerproject.org
 - ✍️ Provides transportation, legal assistance, support groups, bereavement counseling, and education.
- 🗑️ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
 - ☎️ 800-827-1000; www.va.gov
 - ✍️ Must be a veteran
 - ✍️ Treatment may be available for cancer-related conditions

What are some resources (continued)?

National Patient Travel Helpline

 757-318-9107; www.patienttravel.org



 Provides information about all forms of charitable, long-distance medical air transportation and referrals to appropriate resources

Sense of Security

 866-736-3113; www.senseofsecurity.org

 financial assistance for **breast cancer patients in treatment only**

What can you do?

-  Talk with your Social Worker, Nurse, Physician about your transportation, financial and related needs
-  Colorado Cancer Resource Guide is an online resource guide with local information. www.ccronline.org (NO PHONE)



Denver Native American Cancer Advocates
(303) 837-7163

National Native American Cancer Advocates
1-800-537-8295

“Native American Cancer Education for Survivors”
<http://NatAmCancer.org>

Native American Cancer Research

3022 South Nova Road, Pine, CO 80470-7830

303-838-9359; fax: 303-838-7629

The issues identified in this Fact Sheet are from intertribal focus groups held in 2006.

Thank you to those who participated

