



# Healthy Native Babies Project: Honoring the Past, Learning for the Future

A Collaboration Between the *Healthy Native Babies Project* Workgroup  
and the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of  
Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)





# International Congress on Circumpolar Health

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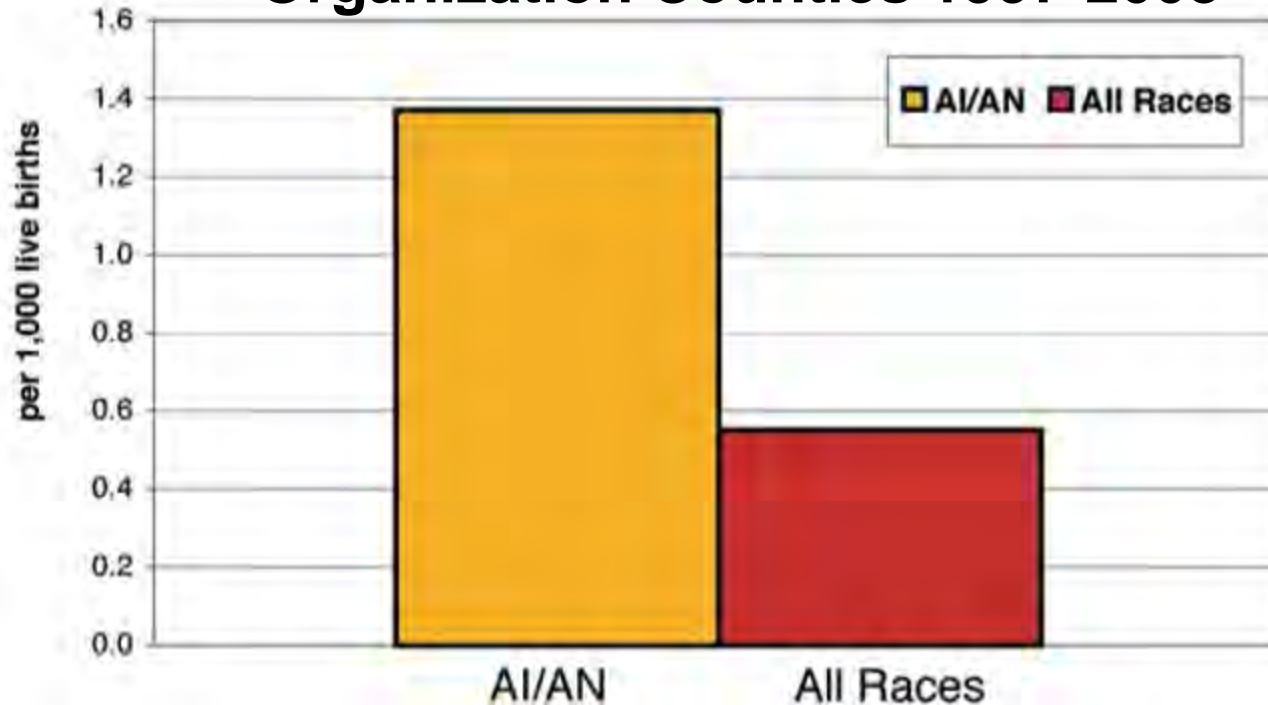
# Incidence of SIDS

- **SIDS is declining in the U.S., but disparities still exist among certain populations**
- **2-4 times more likely to occur to American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) babies**
- **SIDS is the leading single cause of post-neonatal deaths for AI/ANs**



# Proportion of Infant Deaths Due to SIDS

## AI/AN SIDS Rates for Urban Indian Health Organization Counties 1997-2003\*



\*Data for counties with greater than 250,000 total population only.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, CDC; prepared by the Urban Indian Health Institute.



# Healthy Native Babies Project

## A History of this Project:

- **Staff from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) met with AI/ANs and other federal partners starting in 2002**
- **They formed a workgroup to create an outreach initiative**
- **The effort focused on areas with highest SIDS rates: U.S. Northern Tier**



# Phase I

- **Community-based participatory research**
- **Focus groups and Talking Circles with AI/AN parents**





# Focus Group Outcomes

- **Tailor media and materials for regional setting**
- **Integrate stories into educational interventions**
- **Target relationships through educational interventions**





# Project Materials & Tools

- ***Healthy Native Babies Project Workbook Packet***
  - **Workbook with 5 content chapters and appendices**
  - ***Toolkit* Disk**
  - **Handouts**
- ***Healthy Native Babies Project Facilitator's Packet***
  - ***Resources* Disk**
  - **Facilitator's Guides and Presentations**
  - **Activities**
  - **Tests and Evaluations**
- **National Brochure and Flyer**





# Project Materials & Tools

- **Train-the-Trainer Sessions**
  - **24 sessions held from 2006-2008**
  - **Attendees included caregivers, health care providers, Tribal and federal staff**
- **Mini-Grant Implementation and Support**
  - **36 Tribes and organizations received for custom education materials**



# Train-the-Trainer Sessions





# Messaging Tailored to the Family & Community

- **Risk reduction model used**
- **Triple Risk Theory-** vulnerable infant, critical development period, outside stressors
- **Individualize message to parent/family situation**
- **Discuss bed sharing in context of what we know increases risk**
- **Discuss things that decrease risk**



# Controllable Factors that Increase Risk

- **Maternal alcohol use** during & after pregnancy
- **Tobacco use** during & after pregnancy
- **Stomach sleeping**
- **Soft surfaces & loose, fluffy bedding**
- **Bed sharing** (w/above risk factors), **multiple people in the bed; non standard sleep surfaces** (such as couch or chair)



# Lowering the Risk

- **Always back to sleep**
- **Firm sleep surface without soft objects, fluffy covers/crib bumpers**
- **Sleep area close to caregivers**
- **Pacifier use**
- **Light sleep clothing to avoid overheating**



# Lowering the Risk

- **Avoid products that CLAIM to reduce the risk...none have been proven to do so**
- **Breast feeding**
- **Regular prenatal (and preconception) care**
- **Public health nurse visits**



# Lessons Learned

- **Training strategies need to be both didactic and interactive**
- **Understanding important racial values, beliefs and health-seeking behaviors is needed to target AI/AN audiences**
- **High prevalence of behaviors that pose risks demand rigorous study to determine the reasons behind the numbers, including qualitative evaluation of women's stories**



# Outreach to Native Communities

- **Entire extended family and community need to be included**
- **Elders have a significant role and authority in Native families, and they influence infant care practices**
- **The community or Tribe is an important force and should be included in SIDS risk-reduction efforts**
- **Resources need to be colorful, culturally specific and use traditional languages**





# Summary

- ***Healthy Native Babies Project*** uses a community-based approach, blending values & beliefs and drawing on existing strengths and traditional practices





# Resources:

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sids/>

1-800-505-CRIB (2742)

