



*** MEDIA ADVISORY ***

Kansas Tribal Health Summit set for Aug. 28 at Sunflower Nonprofit Center

**Event to address the health priorities of the
four sovereign Native nations in Kansas.**

TOPEKA, Kan. – For the first time in four years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kansas Tribal Health Summit will be held in-person when the Kansas Alliance for Tribal Community Health (KATCH) and the state’s four sovereign Native nations host the event Aug. 28 at the Sunflower Nonprofit Center. KATCH, a new intertribal health coalition representing the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, and the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska, is organizing the summit. The inaugural summit, organized by the four tribes in cooperation with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, was held in 2013. The event was held annually through 2019.

Tribal populations across the country continue to face health disparities, including a disproportionately higher loss of life before and immediately after the COVID pandemic. During that brief period, Native American life expectancy decreased by almost two years. But, committed tribal members are working to reverse this sobering statistic in Kansas.

KATCH is committed to culturally relevant health education strategies that meet tribal communities’ needs, with goals of improving the health and well-being of Native Americans across the state and creating sustainable support and infrastructure for the four tribes to address health inequities.

“The purpose of KATCH is to support the tribes in their identified health priorities,” said Dr. Ponka-We Victors-Cozad, the American Heart Association Kansas Tribal Community Impact Director who coordinates activities with KATCH. “The summit allows our communities to learn from experts and each other about the best ways to achieve optimal health and well-being.”



WHAT: 2023 Kansas Tribal Health Summit
WHEN: 8:30 to 4:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 28
WHERE: Sunflower Nonprofit Center, 5820 SW Sixth Ave., Topeka, KS 66606
WHY: Tribal populations across the country continue to face health disparities. The health summit is an opportunity for members of the Kansas tribes to learn more from national experts and each other on topics they deem most important to their overall health and well-being.

Topics that will be addressed include mental and behavioral health, diabetes, food system sovereignty and nutrition, COVID-19, maternal health, public health policy, and the role of cultural restoration in optimal health.

Speakers include Francon Francees, a licensed clinical mental health counselor and founder of the Wilmington, N.C.-based consulting group Healing Your Almond, and Dr. Anitra Warrior, American

Indian child psychologist and owner of Morningstar Counseling in Lincoln, Neb.

Francees' presentation, "Self-care and the Five Senses: Explore How Our Motions Live in Our Bodies," will focus on stress, anxiety, and trauma and how they impact deep and outer brain function, as well as the importance of connection and its relationship to resilience. Dr. Warrior's session, "Reclaiming the Path of Wellness: Culturally Responsive Approaches in Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse," will focus on mental and behavioral health.

Other sessions and activities include:

- Tribal Community Health Needs: A Conversation with Tribal Leadership.
- Protecting You and Your Family from COVID-19, led by Dr. Jamie Jacobsen, medical director for the Prairie Band Potawatomi Health Center.
- Tribal Food Sovereignty Conversation: What's Happening in Kansas and Beyond.
- Kansas State Rep. Christina Haswood, D-Lawrence and a member of the Navajo Nation, will speak about Tribal Public Health in Kansas Policy.
- Living Your Best Life with Diabetes: a panel discussion.
- Breastfeeding Among Generations of Indigenous Moms in Kansas: a panel discussion.
- Health Awareness Chalk Drawing Contest.

Ponka-We Victors-Cozad and KATCH Co-Chair Maria Fairman will be available for interviews. If you have questions or are interested in covering the event, contact:

Brett Riggs, Director of Communications
Sunflower Foundation
briggs@sunflowerfoundation.org
785.232.3000 Ext. 113