



# UNTOLD STORIES: AMERICAN INDIANS AND TOBACCO

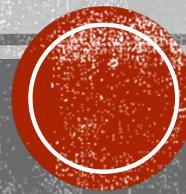
**Claradina Soto, PhD, MPH**

**Associate Professor**

**University of Southern California**

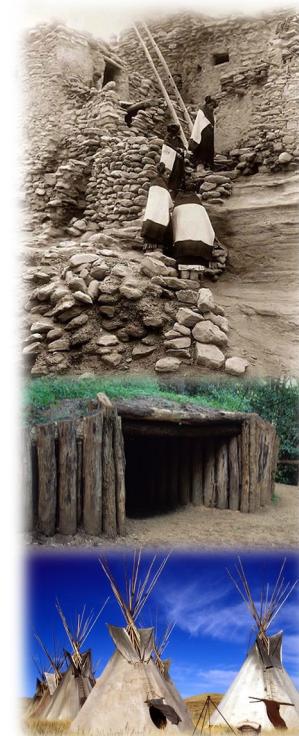
**Department of Population and Public  
Health Sciences**

**July 08, 2024**



# **AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE POPULATIONS**

- In the United States, 9.7 million people identify as American Indian (AI) or Alaska Native (AN)
- 570+ different AIAN Tribes in the US
- Alaska
  - 229 federally recognized Tribes
- Navajo Nation Tribe
  - Largest Indian Reservation
- Over 200 indigenous languages



Source: U.S. Census 2020

# AIAN POPULATIONS IN CALIFORNIA

- In California 630,000 identify as AI/AN\*
- 110 federally recognized tribes
- 85 reservations or “Rancherias”
- More AIs reside in CA than in any other state
- Largest ‘Urban AI’ population

\*U.S. Census, 2020



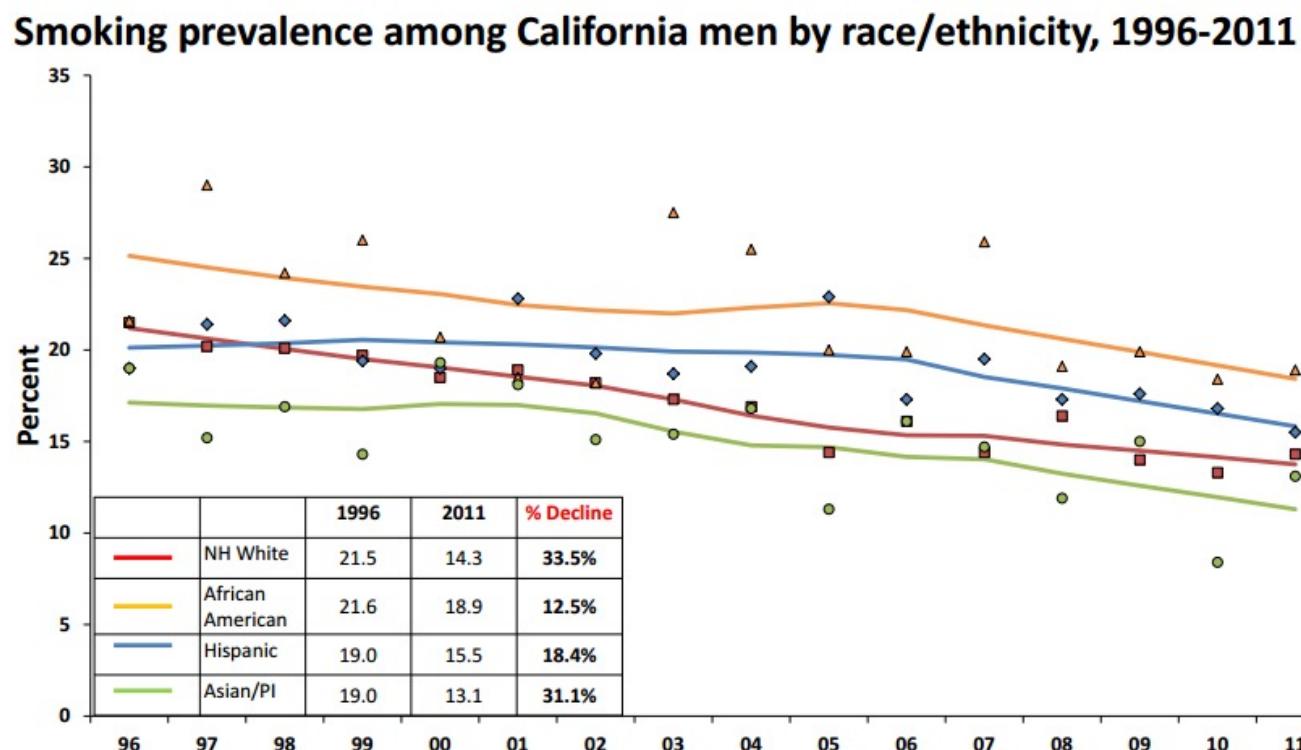


# TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

- Tribal sovereignty provides Tribal governments the inherent right to:
  - Govern their members
  - Govern their Tribal lands
  - Establish their own laws
- Tribal sovereignty provides exemption from state tax and smoke-free laws.
- Tribes have the right to implement smoke-free policies.
- However, Tribes are subject to the authority of federal laws.



# CA SMOKING PREVALENCE



Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) 1996-2011. The data are weighted to the 2000 California population.

Note the smooth lines are based on a model to smooth out the data.

Prepared by: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program, March 2012.



# DATA ON AIAN ADULT TOBACCO USE

- More than **1 in 5 AIAN** adults currently smoke cigarettes.
- 22.6% adult American Indians and Alaska Natives currently smoke cigarettes compared to 13.7% of adults overall.
- **Lung cancer**, which can be caused by cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke, is the leading cause of cancer deaths among AI/AN people.
- 9.3% AIAN use smokeless tobacco compared with 5.0% non-Hispanic Whites.



# DATA ON AIAN YOUTH TOBACCO USE



- AIAN high schoolers have the highest current cigarette smoking rate of any other race or ethnicity at **16.2%**, compared to **5.8%** overall.
- AIAN middle schoolers, **3.7%** currently smoke cigarettes compared to **2.3%** of middle schoolers overall.

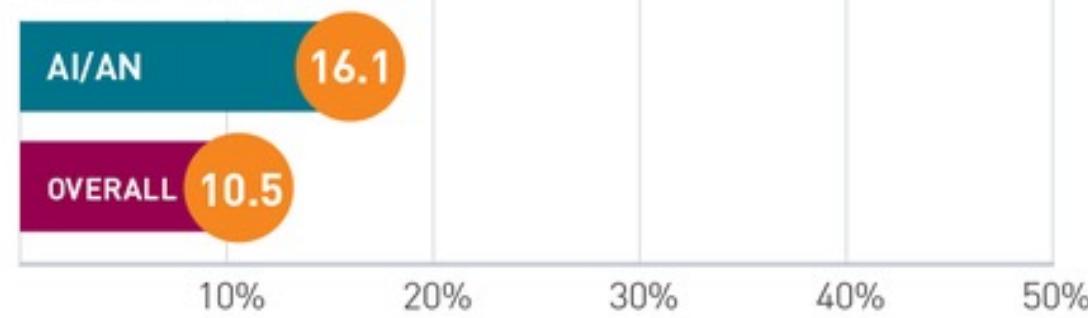


## E-cigarette use among middle and high schoolers

### High schoolers



### Middle schoolers



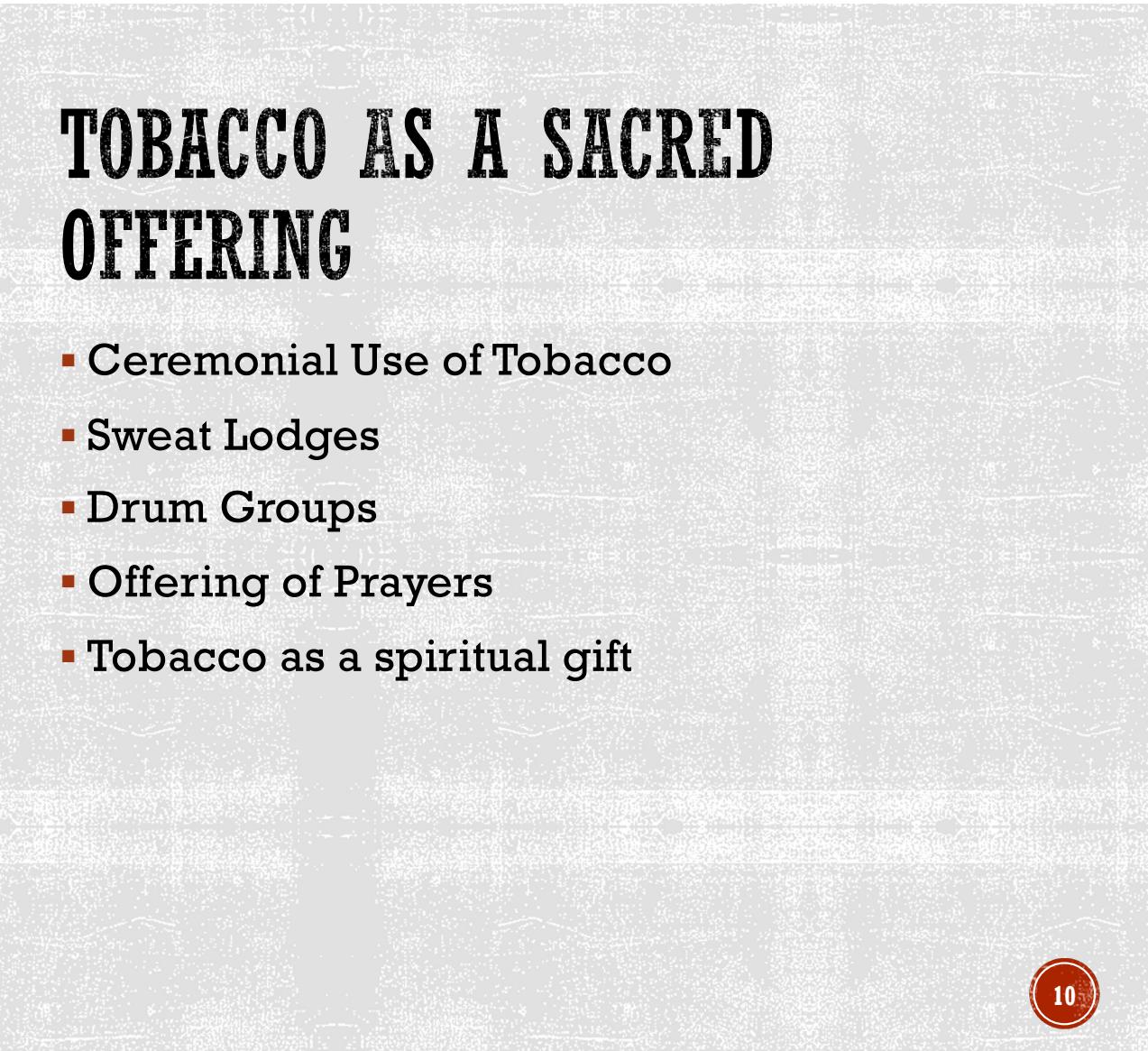
\*2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey data



# TOBACCO: SACRED USE, NOT ABUSE

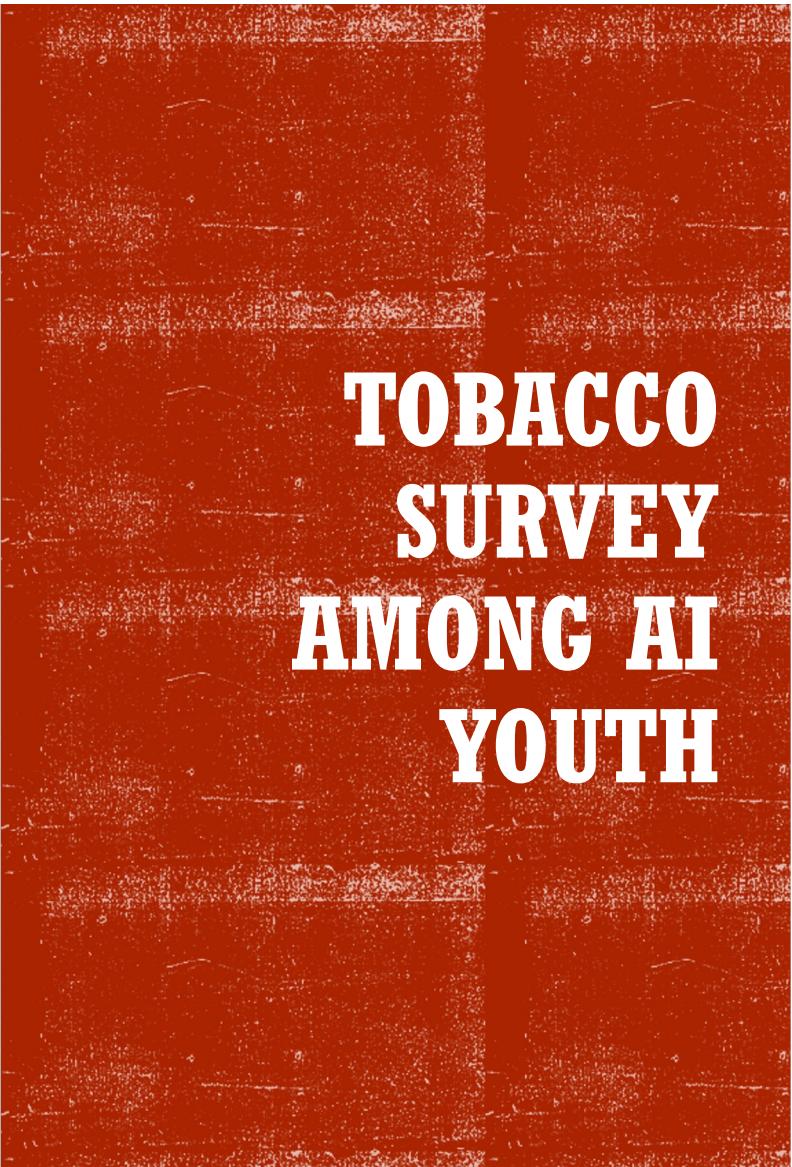
- Tobacco has played an important role in traditional Native American Indian cultures for thousands of years.
- Tobacco is a medicine.
- The public health problem is recreational, habitual use of commercial tobacco.







**GATHERING DATA AMONG TRIBAL COMMUNITIES**



# TOBACCO SURVEY AMONG AI YOUTH

- Developed culturally specific survey instrument with input from AI advisory committee (AC) members.
- Pilot tested (n=96) and revised survey.
- **Sample of 1,076 AI adolescents** (urban and rural) who completed surveys.
- Survey topics included:
  - Cigarette Use
  - Ceremonial & Non-ceremonial tobacco use
  - Quitting smoking
  - American Indian activities (pow-wows, sweat lodge, etc.)
- Incentives:
  - Students received a \$6 value gift for completion of a survey
  - Organizations received monetary gift for participating



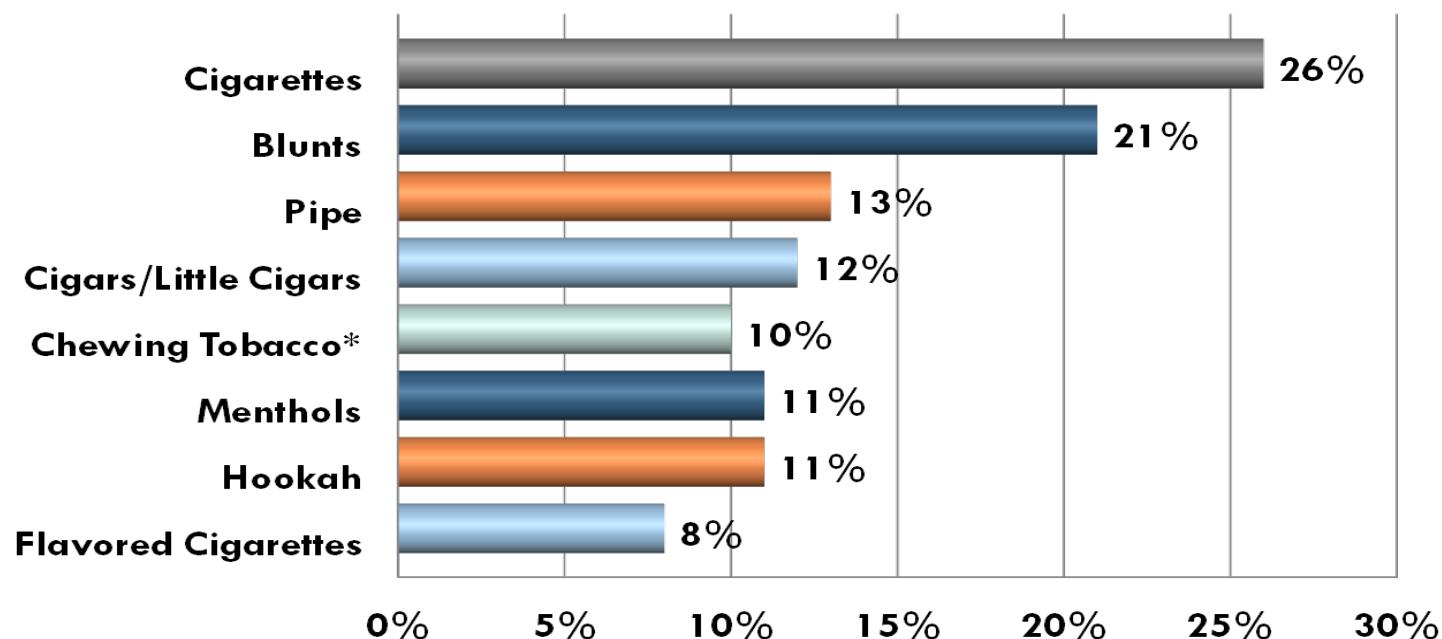
Of the 58 counties in California, this map reflects the **41 Counties** in which survey participants reside, according to the zip codes they provided on the survey.

N=49 Sites (schools,  
youth groups, cultural  
gatherings)

Keck School of  
Medicine of USC

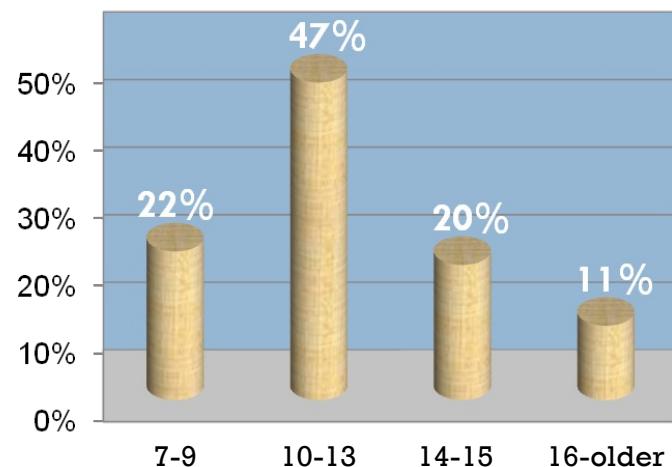
# **TOBACCO SURVEY AMONG AI YOUTH**

# OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS USED IN LAST 30 DAYS

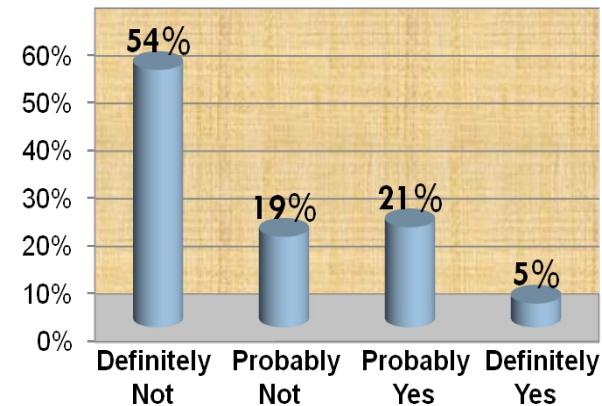


# CIGARETTE USE

Age at First Puff



Will Smoke in Next Year



A photograph capturing a vibrant powwow scene. In the foreground, several men are performing a traditional dance. They are adorned in elaborate costumes featuring intricate beadwork, colorful feathers (including large blue and yellow ones), and traditional headgear like feathered headdresses and headbands with geometric patterns. Some men are singing into microphones, while others play large wooden drums with drumsticks. The background shows more people, some in traditional dress and others in modern clothing, watching the performance.

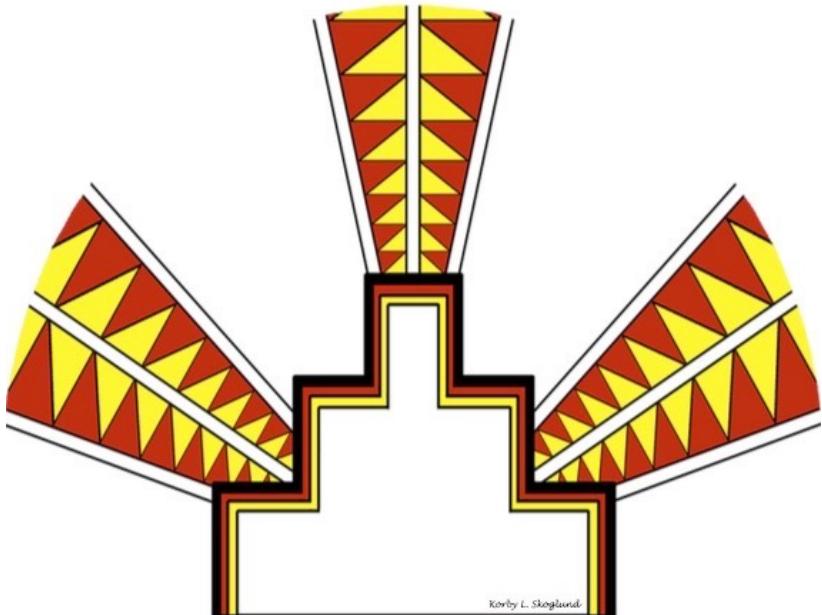
# INTERVENTIONS FOR NATIVE TEENS

# **SMOKING CESSATION EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENTS FOR AIAN YOUTH**

- Few culturally tailored evidence-based treatments (EBT) unique to American Indian & Alaska Native (AIAN) youth exist.
- One strategy for developing effective and culturally relevant smoking cessation programs is to adapt existing evidence-based programs for varying cultural contexts.
- Project EX (Dr. Steve Sussman, PhD)
  - An empirically validated teen commercial tobacco use cessation program
  - Adapted to meet the needs of culturally diverse populations
  - Implemented and evaluated in Thailand, Spain, Russia, Israel, the United States, China, Korea, and China



# PROJECT SUN



STOP THE USE OF NICOTINE: CESSATION PROGRAM

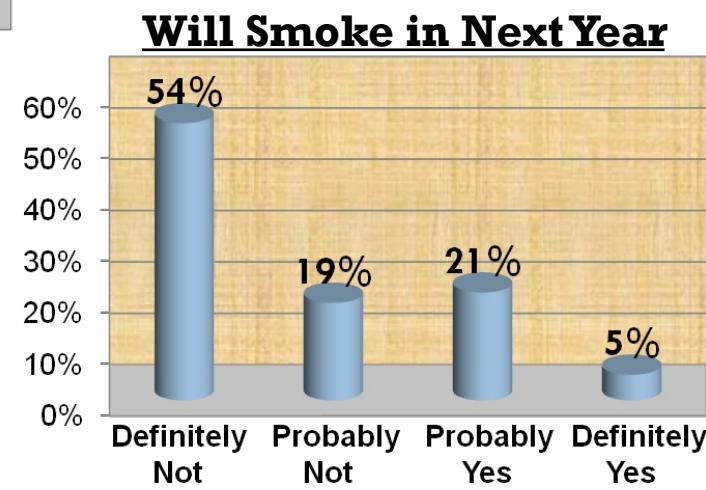
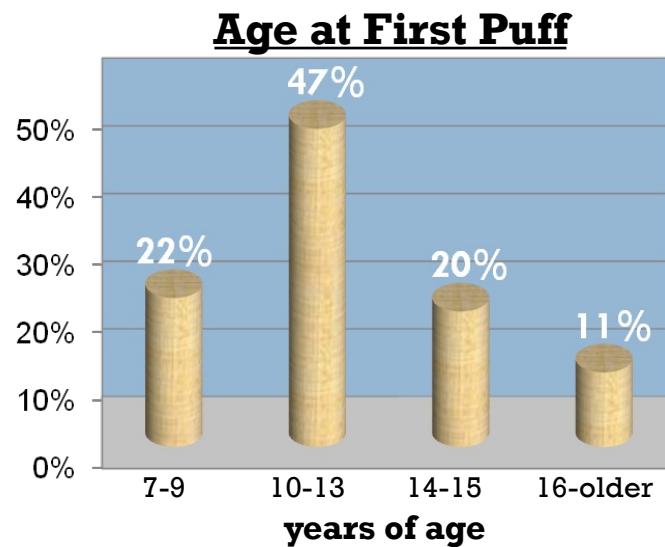
## CULTURAL TAILORING

- Tailored to AIAN teens: talking circle format, games, role play, “talk shows.”
- Alternative activities to motivate teens to attempt to quit nicotine use, cope with withdrawal and negative moods, and seek other non-tobacco using activities:
  - Deep Breathing
  - Relaxation
  - Meditation
  - Yoga
- Successful adaptations for smoking cessation programs for AIAN should incorporate:
  - Cultural and historical characteristics, values and traditions, cultural activities for behavioral modification, as well as cultural stories to help participants distinguish between the use of ceremonial from commercial tobacco

# **PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS**



# WHY EDUCATION IS NEEDED!



## SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING

- Pilot grant to train 15 Native American teens ages 16-24 years of age to create;
  - PSA – public service announcement
  - Digital Storytelling
  - Photovoice
- Northern CA Tribes
- Peer Educators
  - Middle/High School
  - Tribal Council



# YOUTH MEDIA MESSAGES

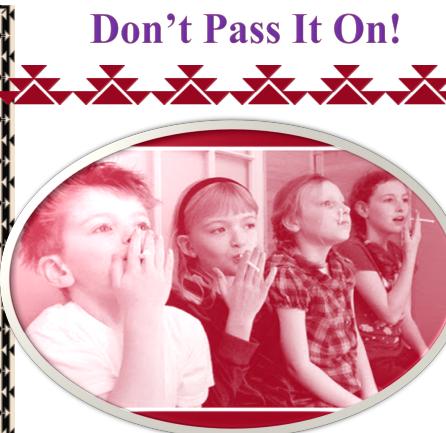
## American Indian Youth Video

**It Looks Like Candy**



The tobacco companies are manipulating their products' colors and designs to look more like candy. Every age needs to know the similarity between the candy and tobacco products. Kids are being targeted and society needs to be aware of the manipulation. If more people were aware of this attack on children, they would be very angry!

Haskola, age 16



Kids are influenced by their family and friends. Everyone should understand that kids look up to us and want to follow in our footsteps. Smoking shouldn't be passed on through generations when they weren't born smoking. Kids are like sponges, we need to guide them into the traditional use of tobacco and not commercial abuse.

Izayah, age 16

**Don't litter!**  
Keep our ocean clean for the critters.



Once a single cigarette is littered near the ocean it pollutes 5 gallons of water. Do you really want to be the cause of the death of some harmless sea life? It takes a decade or more to decompose in the ocean. And cigarette butts have long been the single most collected item on the world's beaches. In the past 32 years, 60 million cigarette butts have been collected total.

The most littered item in the world is cigarette butts.

Arelli, age 16

# CULTURALLY RELEVANT MESSAGES

Health Promotion



**TOBACCO CAME TO US AS A GIFT,**

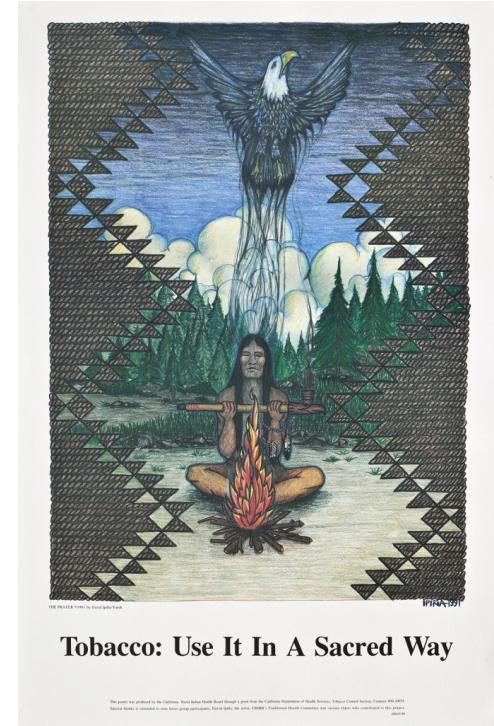
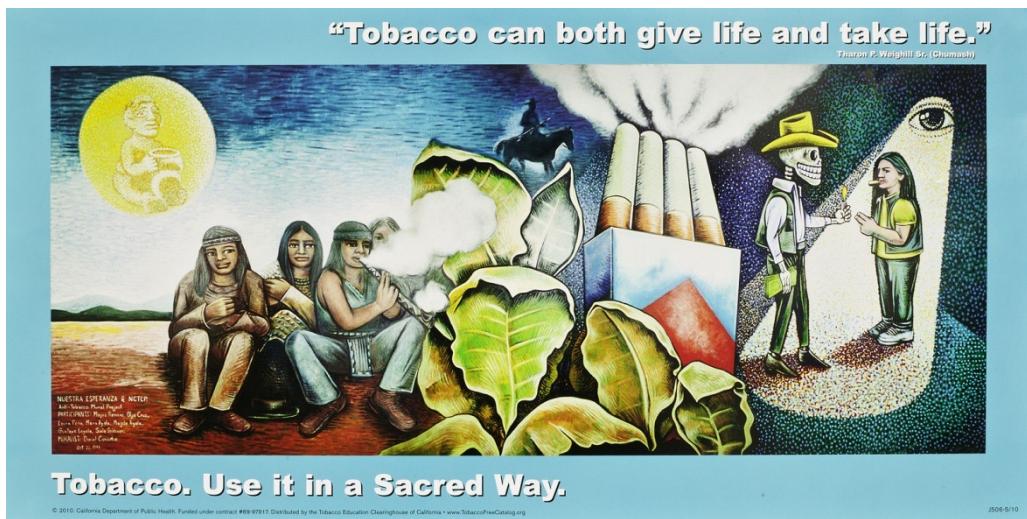


**NOT TO BE ABUSED.**

The Creator gave us tobacco to use as a  
blessing for our families, our people, and ourselves.  
Smoking commercial cigarettes hurts you and your family.  
So, if you smoke, quit. Tobacco is a gift. Don't abuse it.

## **TRADITIONAL TOBACCO MESSAGE**

- CA specific material
- Developed by community advisory board
- Drawn by a Native Californian artist
- Incorporates cultural values and beliefs





## NATIONAL NATIVE TOBACCO PROGRAMS

- National Native Network: Keep It Sacred
  - Culturally relevant resources
  - Technical Assistance
  - Up-to-date information
- Quit Smoking Hotline
  - Text NATIVE to 47848





# QUESTIONS?

**Claradina Soto (Navajo/Pueblo), PhD, MPH**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Population and Public Health Sciences

Keck School of Medicine  
University of Southern California  
2001 N. Soto Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90032  
Telephone: (323) 442-8219

[toya@usc.edu](mailto:toya@usc.edu)



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