

Addressing Cancer Disparities through an Arts-Based Research Partnership

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Abstract

This project brings together a community-academic partnership to increase community readiness to address cancer in communities that experience cancer disparities. A community readiness assessment conducted with an urban Native American population in the Great Plains found that the community perceived a low level of susceptibility to cancer and a low level of benefit from efforts to prevent, treat or research cancer, leading to low levels of self-efficacy and readiness to address cancer.¹ We are developing a Community Advisory Board for the Medical Arts (CABMA) that will engage in arts-based research methods to collect and analyze data that will inform efforts to increase the Native American community's perceived susceptibility of cancer, to heighten community understanding of the benefits of screening and treatment, and build collective-efficacy to increase community participation in cancer education, prevention, treatment, and research.

The Community Advisory Board for the Medical Arts (CABMA) will focus efforts on Native American communities in the Great Plains in year one, with the long-term goal of working with other populations in the Great Plains to address health disparities and related social determinants of health primarily in underrepresented minority communities across Nebraska.

Community Partners



Founding members of the community advisory board represent the following three Omaha-based community organizations:

Steve Tamayo @ Bluebird Cultural Initiative (BCI), an Omaha-based non-profit organization which provides educational lectures, performances, and workshops on a variety of topics related to AI art and culture.

Brigitte McQueen @ The Union for Contemporary Art, a North Omaha-based non-profit organization which provides art education, civic engagement, art studio space and exhibitions to strengthen the cultural and social landscape of the community by using the arts as a vehicle to inspire positive social change.

Aislinn Rookwood @ Youth Enjoy Science (YES), a national cancer institute-funded cancer research education and workforce development program which motivates, involves, educates, and mentors AI students and their communities in cancer prevention, treatment, and research.

Academic Partners



Founding members of the community advisory board include the following three Multiple Principal Investigators:

Rachel Mindrup is an Assistant Professor of Fine and Performing Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Richard L. Deming, MD Endowed Chair in Medical Humanities at Creighton University. Her current painting practice is about the study of the figure and portraiture in art and its relation to medicine, healing and identity.

Mark Gilbert is an Associate Professor of Art and Art History in the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media at the University of Nebraska Omaha. He is an artist, teacher, and researcher who has worked on several high-profile art-based research projects using portraiture to illuminate the patient and caregiver experience of illness, recovery, and care.

Regina Idoate is an Assistant Professor of Health Promotion in the College of Public Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She is also affiliate faculty in Medical Humanities at the University of Nebraska Omaha. She is a population health scientist.

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Strategic Planning



Figure 1. Native American women coming together to create an embodied loom on the University of Nebraska at Omaha campus.



Figure 2. Native youth participating in a summer program created by the YES program, the OPS-NICE program, and BCI.

The Community Advisory Board will develop strategic plans for an initial study investigating the effectiveness of arts-based medical humanities research in increasing Native American community readiness to address cancer through 1) raising awareness of the benefits of cancer prevention, treatment and research, 2) increasing the perceived susceptibility of cancer and 3) increasing collective efficacy in cancer education, prevention, treatment, and research.

Specific Aims

We have three related aims:

1. Develop a community advisory board with Native American community members, community arts organizations, Indigenous artists, healthcare professionals, and researchers from academic institutions with diverse expertise related to cancer education, Indigenous studies, and arts-based research to provide input and advice on implementation efforts and to elicit recommendations for improvements.
2. Engage the community advisory board and Native American community in identifying the Native American community's perceptions of cancer susceptibility & perceived benefits of treatment to determine barriers that may impede implementation and strengths that can be used in the implementation effort.
3. Design a strategic community-based participatory research study with a stage-appropriate arts-based educational intervention to increase collective efficacy and to address barriers and leverage facilitators that were identified through earlier data collection for addressing cancer among Native American community members.

Arts-based Research Methods

The CABMA will conduct narrative inquiry with an urban Native American community in the Great Plains through (1) talking circles, (2) testimony, and (3) artistic statements.

1. **Talking circles**, similar to focus groups, will follow Indigenous protocol, inquiring about Native American cancer susceptibility & perceived benefits of prevention, treatment & research.
2. **Testimonies** will be collected in written reflections or semi-structured interviews, offering descriptions of Native American lived experiences of cancer that will provide circumstantial evidence to guide practice in context.
3. **Artistic statements** will serve as visual or verbal data presented in various mediums (e.g., written, music, visual, performance) answering questions regarding urban Native American collective efficacy to address cancer.

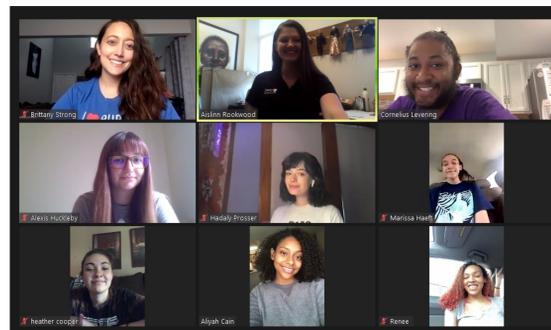


Figure 3. Native American high school students participating in a virtual talking circle during a summer program through YES.



Figure 4. An artistic statement created during a service-learning project, Buckskin Buddies.

References

1. Idoate, R., Gilbert, M., King, K. M., Spellman, L., McWilliams, B., Strong, B., ... & Solheim, J. (2021). Urban American Indian Community Health Beliefs Associated with Addressing Cancer in the Northern Plains Region. *Journal of Cancer Education*, 36(5), 996-1004.

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