The Native CIRCLE (Cancer Information Resource Center and Learning Exchange), established in 1997 and once located within the Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center, was created to provide, maintain and disseminate culturally appropriate cancer, diabetes, health and wellness materials for Indigenous peoples.

In 2020, Native CIRCLE transitioned the resource center to the Center for Indigenous Cancer Research at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. The goals of Native CIRCLE are to advance community outreach, mentor students, and contribute to the science of cancer health disparities.

CICR extends a special thanks to Lisa Baethke, Judith Kaur, MD and Jonathan Baines, MD, PhD at Mayo Clinic for their vision and guidance during the transition of Native CIRCLE. We are also appreciative for the help of Yvette Holston and the team at Roswell Park who were responsible for developing the new Native CIRCLE web page.

If you are interested in learning more about Native CIRCLE, or your organization would like to contribute health education materials to the Native CIRCLE library, please contact:

William Maybee
Community Relations Coordinator
William.maybee@roswellpark.org

ROOTS (Resources, Optimizing Outreach, Teaching and Science for Native American and WNY Cancer Prevention) serves as an easily accessible learning platform for people from Indigenous and rural communities to enhance the knowledge of clinical trials and the research process. Funded by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the aim of this grant program is to describe the process and increase access to new and emerging clinical trial opportunities.

With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine related clinical trials, there is a newfound awareness and interest from our communities to learn more about health research. To support this awareness, CICR developed a short video to introduce viewers to CICR and offer a virtual tour of the Roswell Park BioBus. The BioBus travels into adjacent communities with the intent to provide research-related education and offer opportunities to participate in clinical trials through biological specimen collection.

To learn more about CICR, the BioBus, and the implications of research on Indigenous communities,
This episode features CICR’s Community Relations Coordinator, Will Maybee. Will offers some insight on traditional food diets, holistic and traditional approaches to health, and suggestions for cancer patients and families to help increase physical activity to improve quality of life.

If you have suggestions for guests you’d like to hear featured on The Talking Circle Podcast, please contact Josie Raphaelito, The Talking Circle host at josie.raphaelito@roswellpark.org.

CICR’s grant from the National Cancer Institute, referred to as Screen to Save, focuses on building awareness, providing resources and educating Native American and rural communities on two critical topics — colorectal cancer and clinical trials. Many of our Indigenous communities experience higher rates of colorectal cancer compared to other communities, as well as limited opportunities to participate in clinical trials. CICR works closely with Native communities, and rural partners to share knowledge and exchange resources. Classes on colorectal cancer and clinical trials are now offered virtually one-on-one at a time of your choosing!

Participants are also offered a $15 gift card.

Contact Will Maybee to set up an individual or group session.

Text or call 716-225-3418
Email William.Maybee@RoswellPark.org
Two New Projects Focus on Sugar Sweetened Beverages

Indigenous Knowledge, nutrition, and physical activity are important components of cancer prevention and wellness in our communities. Funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) over the next two years, we will partner with Indigenous communities to create evidence-based, culturally appropriate nutrition education aimed at encouraging Native men to lessen their consumption of sugary beverages.

The second project is funded by the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation and will focus on how sugary beverages are marketed in Native communities. We will partner with community leaders to receive feedback on the existing language used in marketing sugary beverages in Native communities, and then discuss ideas for adapting marketing language in a culturally appropriate way that promotes healthier behaviors and purchase decisions.

Each month, CICR’s Talking Circle webinar series highlights topics that are important to Indigenous communities. The February webinar featured Melissa Begay, MD, an Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico’s Department of Pulmonology Critical Care and Sleep Medicine. Dr. Begay presented on “Sleep in Native America;” which included a discussion on her work in sleep medicine and how Indigenous Knowledge about sleep relates to a holistic understanding of health and wellness. Past webinars included Santee Smith who presented on "Indigenous Creativity and Leadership" and Kris Rhodes, MPH who presented on "Tobacco Two Ways: Understanding Traditional Tobacco Use."

To watch previous presentations and register for future webinars CLICK HERE
Is there a song, quote or activity that helps you find balance during these strange COVID-19 times?

Well, the first song that comes to mind is “Three Little Birds” by Bob Marley. It is always a reminder that everything will be all right. I also love the poem “Anyway” by Mother Teresa. It is a powerful representation of always doing the right thing to create a kind and happy world, and to give your best. I also practice yoga daily and find moving meditation helps me find my balance, especially right now.
How has your involvement with the Roswell Park Indigenous Research Group support partnership building with CICR and Indigenous communities?

The CICR, directed by Dr. Rodney Haring, is the first of its kind in the Eastern United States (US). It was established in 2020 to continue Roswell Park’s work with Native Americans and other Indigenous populations. Indigenous communities face some of the greatest cancer health disparities, higher mortality rates, and persistent challenges in health equity. Recent grant support for the CICR and Roswell Park has laid the foundation to build bi-directional networks to support successful navigation of the cancer care continuum for Native American and rural communities. This program will form bridges between Indian Health Services health centers and thoughtfully selected FQHCs, creating a safety net of providers adjacent to IHS health centers. As we have done with our current screening programs, our aim is to streamline the transfer of patients and information. This is not as an intervention from outside these communities, but an inclusive, intentional program coordinated in partnership with these communities. The project proposes pairs of patient navigators to practice in the IHS health centers and three geographically matched FQHCs.

What are your hopes for the new cancer patient navigator services at Roswell Park in partnership with CICR?

Our goal is to continue to focus on health equity, which gives everyone a fair opportunity to live a long and healthy life. These teams of Indigenous navigators and FQHC-based navigators will provide in-person and on-site navigation focusing on breast cancer, prostate cancer and co-occurring conditions that plague these communities in high rates including obesity, diabetes and other cancers seen in excess. The navigation will focus on education and prevention related to cancer screening and diagnosis, treatment, clinical trials, palliative care and survivorship.
Post-Pandemic, Translational Research, and Indigenous Communities

CICR Director Rodney Haring, PhD, and Research Assistant Whitney Ann Henry, along with Laticia McNaughton, State University of New York at Buffalo, Dean Seneca, Seneca Scientific Solutions, and Donald Warne University of North Dakota, collaborated to create the publication titled, “Post-Pandemic, Translational Research, and Indigenous Communities.” This paper discusses perspectives on the post-pandemic frameworks and policies toward translational science (translating scientific findings to apply them to a community setting) as an approach to advance health promotion for community-based interventions, dissemination, and sustainability in Indigenous communities. This paper also takes a deeper look into the importance of exercising Indigenous self-determination, public health authority, and population health sovereignty.

To read the full paper, CLICK HERE

The Center for Indigenous Cancer Research partnered with Roswell Park’s Cancer Screening, Survivorship and Mentorship team to develop a Cancer Patient Navigator framework that meets the needs of Indigenous and rural communities across New York. The Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation awarded our teams $3.3 million to develop, implement, and evaluate these new services over the next three years. Partnerships with the foundation, Indian Health Services and geographically matched, rural federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) allow our teams to provide on-site and virtual patient navigation. Services include cancer prevention, screening, treatment and education as well as education on clinical trials, palliative care and survivorship.

This new initiative includes hiring six full-time patient navigators who will be based in high-need communities and two virtual navigators. Together, navigators will collaborate with IHS health centers and FQHCs to provide tailored services to improve cancer education, screening and co-occurring disease management. Click here to watch the full press conference between Roswell Park, The Center for Indigenous Cancer Research, and the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation.

Why were these services created?

Much of this initiative was developed as a response to CICR’s Two-Row project where our team listened to Indigenous leaders and community members about their experiences throughout various cancer care services. We heard the process is complex and challenging, and that there was a need to have an Indigenous person to help guide our community members and serve as additional support.

Interested in Becoming a Cancer Patient Navigator?

Visit CLICK HERE to view available positions.

Listen to these stories and perspectives shared in our Two-Row video:
Need to Talk to Someone?

If you're having a hard time coping with the challenges we currently face, you are not alone. Take these steps toward help:

- Talk to family, friends, spiritual leaders or Indigenous medicine people. Simply expressing your fears can greatly alleviate anxiety and uncertainty.
- Reach out to your Indian Health Services Behavioral Health Team.
- Tribal and Indian Gaming Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) by way of human resources, is a free service that can provide virtual counseling for employees and family members that reside in the same household.
- Call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 (TTY 1-800-846-8517).

Our Mission

The Center for Indigenous Cancer Research aims to honor the values of Indigenous Knowledge, sovereignty, and respect for the environment through community-driven partnerships, collaborative research and education to reduce the impact of cancer on Indigenous communities regionally, nationally and internationally.