Traditional concepts and teachings of balance and harmony have guided our American Indian and Alaska Native people. For generations, we have been taught that our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being is interconnected with our community and what affects our surroundings will affect our health.

For our people to be healthy and strong, the community must live in balance and harmony with all things – the earth, the water, the animals, the family and each other.

When illness afflicts our community, we come together and find a solution to heal and prevent future sickness.

Restoring the Balance promotes Indian Country’s way of providing methods, implementing activities, and encouraging behaviors to improve our community’s public health.

Restoring the Balance is a national public health awareness effort of the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

This campaign is part of a larger joint initiative to increase the capacity and awareness of Indian Country’s public health systems by:
- Strengthening the partnerships of the CDC, NIHB and CDC Tribal Consultation Advisory Committee,
- Enhancing collaborations through the NIHB Public Health Summit and Annual Consumer Conference,
- Identifying and developing culturally appropriate approaches to reduce disease, and
- Educating and training the next generation of public health leaders in Indian Country.

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
The CDC is the nation’s premier public health agency—working to ensure healthy people in a healthy world.

**The National Indian Health Board (NIHB)**
The NIHB mission is to create a world free of health disparities for American Indian and Alaska Natives. NIHB serves as the one voice for American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments to improve the health of their people.

National Indian Health Board
926 Pennsylvania Ave SE
Washington, DC 20003
Phone: 202-507-4070
Fax: 202-507-4071
Web site: www.nihb.org

---

**This pamphlet was supported by Award Number 5U50 MN 325134-03 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.**
What is Public Health?

While health care systems, such as tribal and Indian Health Service (IHS) hospitals and clinics, serve individuals, public health serves our community.

Many professionals are part of our tribal public health system--everyone from health education teachers and nutritionists to emergency personnel and tribal police officers.

In public health, everyone plays a role when they are helping to keep our Native communities safe, clean and free of disease.

Examples of Public Health Activities:

- Immunization programs to prevent diseases such as measles, hepatitis, tetanus, and whooping cough.
- Sanitation facilities to ensure clean drinking water.
- Tribal seat belt and car seat enforcement laws to prevent injuries in motor vehicle accidents.
- Youth education campaigns to encourage healthy behaviors and lifestyles.

Why is Public Health Important to Indian Country?

A healthy Native community gets sick less frequently and spends less money on health care. This means better economic productivity and an improved quality of life for all of Indian Country.

Statistics continue to show that Indian Country lags far behind other communities in basic resources and services; this means our communities are more vulnerable to increased health risks and sickness. We can overcome these barriers by supporting and advancing our public health programs and Restoring the Balance in our communities.

How Can You Help in Restoring the Balance?

Contact your tribal or local health agencies to get involved in prevention and wellness programs in your community.

Speak with your area’s representative of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Tribal Consultation Advisory Committee (CDC-TCAC) about public health issues important to you.

For more information on the CDC-TCAC and to learn about tribal public health initiatives, visit the Restoring the Balance page on the National Indian Health Board’s Web site (www.nihb.org).