

# National Indian Health Board



COLORADO

## Special Diabetes Program for Indians:

*Saving lives in Colorado and providing a strong return on federal investment*

### History

Congress established the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) in 1997 to address the growing epidemic of diabetes in American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Nations. By allowing Tribes to determine their own approach, the program has become the nation’s most effective federal initiative to combat diabetes and serves as a useful model both for diabetes programs nationwide and public health programs in Indian Country. SDPI is currently authorized through Fiscal Year 2023.

### SDPI Outcomes

**301**  
AI/AN DIABETES PROGRAMS IN 35 STATES

**5.5%**  
DECREASE IN PREVALENCE OF DIABETES  
Between 2013 and 2017

**15.4%**  
↓  
**14.6%**

**END STAGE RENAL DISEASE REDUCED BY 54%**  
Between 1999 and 2013- the greatest decline of any racial or ethnic group.

**\$88,000 IN SAVINGS FOR MEDICARE FOR EACH PATIENT KEPT OFF CHEMOTHERAPY**

**TRIBES COLLECT DATA AND HAVE DOCUMENTED THAT THIS INVESTMENT IS BOTH SAVING LIVES AND THE FEDERAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM MONEY!**

### Diabetes in Colorado

**FY 2023 SDPI funding in Colorado totaled \$903,625 for 3 Community Directed Grant Programs:**

- Denver Indian Health and Family Services, Inc.
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, in 2015, approximately 300,000 adults in Colorado – 7.3% of the adult population – had diagnosed diabetes, and many suffered from serious diabetes-related conditions such as heart disease, neuropathy, and eye, foot and skin complications. In addition to the human toll diabetes places on the people of Colorado, it also places a large financial burden on the state’s healthcare system. According to the American Diabetes Association, in 2017, the staggering estimate of cost of diabetes and prediabetes in Colorado was approximately \$3.59 billion.

### SDPI Impact

SDPI provides a strong return on federal investment and is saving lives in Colorado. Since the beginning of SDPI, blood sugar levels have decreased, risk factors of cardiovascular disease have been reduced, diabetes-related kidney disease has been cut by more than half, and primary prevention and weight management programs for Native youth have increased. Nation-wide AI/AN diabetes prevalence decreased from **15.4%** to **14.6%** between 2013 and 2017. National data reflect the excellent outcomes in Native Nations resulting from innovative local level programs.

**Disparities in being told by a Doctor that They have Diabetes in Colorado**

Group	Percentage
AI/AN	9.6%
General Population	5.4%

**\*\*Colorado American Indian and Alaska Native Economic Impact Report, 2015**

For more information, visit <https://www.nihb.org/sdpi/>

# Colorado Tribal Case Study

## Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

### Background

The goal of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe’s Sleeping Ute Diabetes Prevention Program is to “change public perception of diabetes through education and promotion of healthy food choices and regular exercise to promote the understanding of each person’s own role in assuming ownership in one’s choices and behaviors that result in best health outcomes.”

#### Overview of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe:

- Enrolled Members:** 2,134
- Reservation Size:** 575,000 contiguous acres
- Current SDPI Funding Level:** \$333,611
- Best Practice:** Diabetes Related Education



### Programs

The Sleeping Ute Diabetes Prevention Program engages the community in multiple ways, focusing on targeting all ages, and helping patients lower their risk of type 2 diabetes through education.

**Community Outreach:** Nutrition and diabetes education are provided by a registered dietician and registered nurse. Flu clinics, and cultural events are used to keep the community health. Monthly screenings are provided in two communities.

**Health Fairs and Education:** Community screenings, health fairs, education, youth and bike clubs, and exercise activities for both families and the elderly helps promote diabetes prevention behaviors in the community. Events such as the Turkey Trot: Roc-Ur-Mocs, Elder Chair Exercise, and fitness challenges keep Tribal citizens engaged.

**Home Visits and Case Management:** Home visits are provided daily in partnership with public health nurses and community health representatives.

**Native Healing in Prevention Diabetes:** This program seeks to impart Native Wisdom in regards to diabetes prevention and control, educating participants about Native practices such as cultural traditions and activities.

**Tour de Ute: A Journey of Wellness:** Inspired by the Sleeping Ute SDPI program, this program “is a holistic coordinated system of care for children, youth and families to improve their physical, mental, spiritual, nutritional and economic well-being.” This year the Tribe will complete the first phase of the Tour de Ute Trail System, buying bikes to promote hiking and biking programs on the reservation where people can connect with the land, native plants, and well-being.

### Impact

The Sleeping Ute Diabetes Prevention Program has had over 1803 participants in their patient focused programs, activities, and events. A Diabetes Wellness Committee was formed, and meets monthly to discuss IHS data, gather community input, and deploying diabetes education activities in an efficient, timely, and effective manner. The Diabetes Prevention Program has been featured in both Well Nations Magazine and Weight Watchers, and for their work in preventing diabetes. The program has successfully worked with other Tribal offices and the Navajo Nation to host a 29.5 mile walk to the 4 Corners Monument.



*Established by the Tribes to advocate as the united voice of federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, NIHB seeks to reinforce Tribal sovereignty, strengthen Tribal health systems, secure resources, and build capacity to achieve the highest level of health and well-being for our People.*

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