

Dr. Blakely Brown

Blakely Brown, University of Montana Professor of Health and Human Performance conducts community-based participatory research (CBPR) that engages Tribal communities in implementing behavioral and environmental strategies that decrease risk for chronic disease and improve local food environments.

Activities Relevant to State Plan to Prevent Obesity: IHS-funded study with several Montana-Wyoming Indian Reservation communities investigates prevalence of risk factors and seeks funding to fight diabetes in Indian youth. NIH-funded study is pilot testing age- and culturally appropriate diabetes prevention lifestyle strategies in Chippewa, Cree and Crow youth, age 10 – 14, to determine program effect on risk for overweight/obesity and incorporate the strategies into the Tribal schools' health curricula. USDA-RIDGE funded project sought to improve the food environment in convenience stores on the Rocky Boy Reservation. Activities included creating and displaying signage for healthy foods, grocery store tours, education about healthy food choices and thrifty food baskets, grocery store taste tests, healthy cooking lessons, local garden projects (e.g. for kids), and bringing local produce to local markets. A recent study in Missoula evaluated food security and access and nutrition environment scores in local food stores. Another recent study sought to enhance prenatal and postpartum diabetes prevention strategies in Crow and Blackfeet women with gestational diabetes or risk factors associated with diabetes.

Services/Recipients: Through CBPR, Brown engages tribal communities to identify, implement and sustain culturally specific behavioral and environmental strategies that decrease chronic disease, specifically diabetes, risk in children, adolescents and adults.

State Plan Settings: Social/Cultural Environments; Food access/outlets; Schools
CDC Behaviors:

- Increasing fruit & vegetable consumption through increasing produce access
- Decreasing sugar-sweetened beverage and energy dense foods (> 4 calories/gram) consumption through grocery store environmental change and education
- Increasing physical activity gardening activities
- Decreasing screen time through multiple TV Turnoff campaigns during the school year
- Decrease prevalence of food insecurity in underserved communities

Gaps and Concerns: Not all communities view tackling obesity as their number one priority. Need to create obesity prevention programs that “meet the community where they’re at.” Need more food processing outlets in the state to get the locally grown food to local communities. Need to increase K-12 education efforts for having children and adolescents know about the food chain (from farm to fork) and why it’s important to Know Your Farmer.