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### Building Unproblematic searches for Indian/Alaska Native Topics

Alexis Ellsworth-Kopkowski

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# BUILDING UNPROBLEMATIC SEARCHES FOR AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE TOPICS

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Alexis Ellsworth-Kopkowski

# WHY?

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- Background in American Indian Studies
  - Diabetes stereotype
- American Indian Studies came from the American Indian Movement/Red Power Movement of the 60's
  - AIS is founded on activism
- "The current state of US health care is a legacy of a system created to accommodate cost shifting in a for profit environment against a backdrop of wealth inequality, policy gaps, and a diaspora with varying needs" Golden (2021)

# AMERICAN INDIAN, ALASKA NATIVE

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- The first step is to identify your population
  - The best way is to use tribal names. For example, the Tohono O'odham
  - American Indian/Alaska Native is a public health search term but Native American has dominated literature historically
  - Indigenous

From an American Indian Studies perspective the term Indigenous is NOT synonymous with the above and should be used when thinking of international populations but not one specific group.

Native Hawaiians can also be referred to as Indigenous they have many health concerns that AI/AN groups face. HOWEVER, there is no federal trust responsibility with this group and the US health care system.

# WHY DOES THIS TERMINOLOGY MATTER?

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- Because when you are talking about a federally recognized tribe (574) there is a federal trust responsibility
- The federal Indian trust responsibility is also a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation on the part of the United States to protect tribal treaty rights, lands, assets, and resources, as well as a duty to carry out the mandates of federal law with respect to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages
- There is no "free" healthcare system. American Indians/Alaska Natives were GUARANTEED education and health care through their ceded land and treaties.

# LET'S MOVE AWAY FROM NOT RECOGNIZING SYSTEMIC ISSUES

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- The Heckler Report (1985) was the first government sponsored comprehensive overview of health disparities among non-White populations.
  - Findings: Health disparities accounted for 60,000 excess death each year.
- 2003 "Unequal Treatment" report highlighted the major gaps of the Heckler Report. The report's recommendations focused on lifestyle choices and behaviors to improve health outcomes of minority populations but IT DID NOT address the need to further desegregate medical institutions, improve access to quality health care, increase investments in preventive medicine, or change policies and living conditions that contributed to poor health.
- "To improve the health of the nation and achieve health equity understanding the historical contributions of structural racism to health and health-care disparities is crucial" Golden (2021).

# LET'S MOVE AWAY FROM NOT RECOGNIZING SYSTEMIC ISSUES

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- Some popular thinking examples we need to move away from
  - Is transportation to appointments on the reservation the issue or is sparsity of IHS clinics the issue?
- Lifestyle/behavioral choices aren't the entire picture with this group and should not be the default
  - Food deserts
  - Lack of care overall through IHS
  - IHS has NEVER been fully funded
    - Funding is considered discretionary and is therefore dependent on Congressional priorities and is highly variable
  - Racism and discrimination

# QUESTIONS?

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- Are there any questions I can answer?
  - [aellsworthkopkowski@salud.unm.edu](mailto:aellsworthkopkowski@salud.unm.edu)
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- This presentation builds upon the article: Golden SH. The contribution of structural racism to metabolic health disparities in the USA. *Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol.* 2021;9(8):478–480. doi:10.1016/S2213-8587(21)00144-3