

## AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN

In 2009, 1.5 percent of the U.S. adult female population, or 1.8 million women, identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native, either alone or combined with one or more other races.<sup>79</sup> American Indian and Alaska Natives include diverse tribes and cultures distributed throughout the country, but the areas with the largest concentration are in the West, South, and Midwest, particularly Alaska, New Mexico, South Dakota, Montana, Oklahoma, North Dakota, and Arizona.<sup>80</sup> American Indian/Alaska Native communities generally face many challenges as a consequence of displacement and cultural trauma, including high rates of poverty, low rates of educational attainment, and poor health.<sup>81,82</sup>

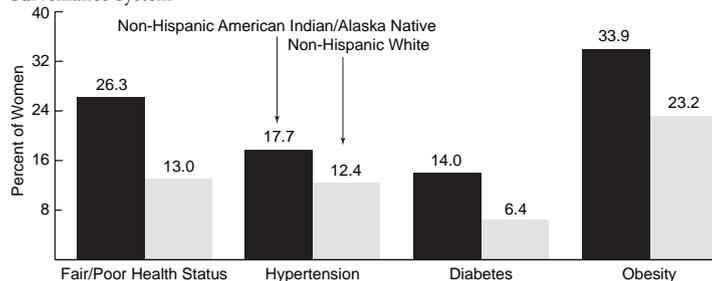
In 2007–2009, non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native women were more than twice as likely to report their health as fair or poor and to report having been diagnosed with diabetes than non-Hispanic White women. They were also more likely to be obese and to have been diagnosed with hypertension. For example, about one-third (33.9 percent) of non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native women were obese, compared to 23.2 percent of non-Hispanic White women. Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native women also had the highest rate of past-month cigarette smoking (41.8 percent), as well as high rates of binge and heavy drinking and illicit drug use (see *Alcohol Use, Cigarette Smoking, and Illicit Drug Use*).

Mirroring higher rates of substance use and chronic conditions, non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native women were also more likely than non-Hispanic White women to die from several specific causes, including unintentional injury, homicide, liver disease, diabetes, and nephritis (kidney inflammation), as well as HIV and hepatitis.

Although many of the health problems afflicting American Indian/Alaska Native women are preventable, geographic, cultural, and financial factors often serve as barriers to accessing quality health care and engaging in healthy behaviors. The Indian Health Service (IHS) helps to provide health care to federally recognized tribes living on or near reservations; yet about 4 in 10 American Indian/Alaska Natives are not served by IHS.<sup>81</sup>

### Selected Health Indicators\* Among Women Aged 18 and Older, by Race, 2007–2009

Source II.6: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System



\*Based on self-reports of health status and doctor-diagnosed health conditions; estimates are age-adjusted.

### Deaths per 100,000\* Females Aged 15 and Older From Selected Causes, by Race, 2005–2007

Source II.16: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System

	Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native	Non-Hispanic White
Diabetes	54.8	22.0
Unintentional Injury	50.5	33.4
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	28.9	7.4
Nephritis (kidney inflammation)	20.6	13.7
Suicide	7.4	7.0
Homicide	4.9	2.0
Viral Hepatitis	3.2	1.5
HIV	2.3	0.7

\*Age-adjusted death rates.