

GLITEC GAZETTE

News From the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center Winter 2024

Boozhoo! Greetings from the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center (GLITEC). This winter 2024 newsletter highlights our latest news and updates. Our quarterly newsletters are posted on the [Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council \(GLITC\)](#) and [Bemidji Area Emergency Response](#) websites. To receive our newsletters and other updates in your inbox, [sign up](#) for emails on topics you care about, such as events, news alerts, reports, and funding opportunities.



Photo credit: Gary Hanke

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It is with great pride and enthusiasm that we, the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center (GLITEC), extend our warmest greetings to you as we embark on a new year, 2024. We are honored to serve as the bridge between public health and the 34 federally recognized Tribes, three IHS service units, and four urban Indian communities within the Bemidji Area (Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Chicago). As we reflect on the accomplishments and milestones of fiscal year 2023 (FY23), we are eager to share our journey with you.

In FY23, GLITEC experienced a transformative year under new administrative leadership. With a leader who embodies the cultural values and traditions of our Tribal Nations, we have witnessed a resurgence of Native inclusivity within our organization. This cultural renaissance has not only reinvigorated our commitment to Tribal practices, but also paved the way for organizational continuity rooted in a cultural continuum. It is through this lens that we have grown and thrived, advancing our mission to support public health policy and action, enhance disease surveillance systems, and increase American Indian/Alaska Native data capacity.

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In 2023, our team expanded with the addition of eight key personnel, each bringing their unique expertise to the table. Together, we have been able to address critical public health needs through diverse and authentic initiatives, especially for those Tribal relatives residing in remote reservations and urban environments. As the world grappled with the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, GLITEC played a pivotal role in maintaining the health and safety of our communities, standing shoulder to shoulder with other Tribal Epidemiology Centers and public health agencies.

Furthermore, our commitment to expanding operations in the Bemidji Area remains unwavering. The addition of a satellite site in Minneapolis at the Indian Health Board, along with a satellite office in Green Bay, Wisconsin, is a testament to our dedication to reaching every corner of our Tribal communities. In FY24, we look forward to establishing additional satellite sites, ensuring that our services are accessible to all.

As we look ahead, we are excited about the opportunities that lie on the horizon. Advancing technology and data utilization initiatives will be our next successful frontier, enabling us to better serve the unique needs of our Tribal Nations.

In the pages of our Gazette, you will find an overview of our activities, including community support, trainings, technical assistance, data and surveillance efforts, and prospective initiatives. We invite you to join us on this journey as we continue to prioritize the health status objectives of our Tribal Nations.

We are grateful for your steadfast support and partnership. Together, we are poised to achieve remarkable strides in public health.



In Good Health,

Waabandashinaang gwayakawaadizin ji gikendamaang ge izhi gayekaadiziyaang

Rebecca St. Germaine, PhD, MPH, ENPH
Enrolled Member Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Chippewa Indians
TECPHI Program Director and Evaluator

Unveiling the Urgency: Understanding Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR)

Written by: Jyostnasri Mogili, PharmD, MS, and Sakshitha Mukta, MS

In the global pursuit of justice, it is crucial to pause and turn our attention to an issue often overlooked but deeply impactful — Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR). GLITEC interviewed Ani Williams, a survivor and voice for change, about the complexities surrounding MMIR and the importance of raising awareness and encouraging dialogue on this topic. Through her interview, GLITEC delves into topics that intersect with MMIR, aiming to raise awareness and promote dialogue on a matter that deserves our collective attention.

Defining MMIR: A Closer Look

MMIR encapsulates the profound challenges faced by Indigenous communities worldwide. Indigenous peoples have a long history of facing violence, starting with colonization and historical trauma. This is seen with Native people who live in what

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is now the United States. MMIR is not limited to a certain age group or gender. Indigenous adults and children of different genders, including males, females, and Two-Spirit persons, are sexually assaulted, missing, and murdered. In general, there is a lack of awareness around these heartbreaking situations.

Williams says that sex objectification of Indigenous people has been documented since the colonial era, and sex trafficking has increased in recent times due to the gender- and race-based stereotypes present in our society. The people who are being assaulted or trafficked may not have proper access to judicial, culturally responsive, or trauma-informed services. Due to the injustice faced by MMIR, there is an increase in the number of Indigenous people whose deaths are mistakenly considered suicides and overdoses. This issue extends beyond mere statistics; it touches the heart of societal struggles, ranging from high suicide rates to alarming levels of sex trafficking within Tribal communities compared with other racial groups.

Understanding the Roots: Intergenerational Trauma and Beyond

Intergenerational trauma lies at the heart of the MMIR crisis. Historical mistreatment, including the legacy of boarding schools, has left a lasting impact. When individuals are taken from their families to boarding schools during their formative years, subjected to abuse, and then thrust back into society to raise families, a cycle of unhealthy coping mechanisms and behaviors is perpetuated.

With GLITEC's dedication to fostering inclusivity, it's imperative to comprehend the nuanced factors contributing to MMIR. Williams passionately advocates, "Decolonization is not hate against non-Native people, but it's to go back to healthy ways of raising families and running communities to reduce our number of missing people."

Role of Traditional Practices and Allies: A Call to Action

The healing journey involves embracing traditional Indigenous practices. Matriarchal ways, spiritual healing, communal activities, and connection to ancestral roots all play pivotal roles. Williams says traditional ways of survival start with food practices and being able to practice hunting and fishing rights. She explains that some traditional practices and foods are consumed based on our DNA and ancestral ways so people don't get sick. There is a need to practice some of these rights, such as hunting, harvesting, and gardening, and bring our food back to a more normal scale.

Williams emphasizes, "Everybody is important." As allies, we are responsible for supporting initiatives and organizations actively working to address MMIR. There are a million ways that allies can do this. For example, increasing awareness through social media and providing financial assistance can be a huge help. Allying with non-Native people and educators in public school systems can also help to address MMIR.

"With Anishinaabe people, our old way is that sometimes you are made to be an example of, but no matter what, you're still important and have something to contribute," says Williams.

Conclusion: Our Collective Responsibility

In an increasingly connected world, we must acknowledge the societal viruses like MMIR that plague communities. MMIR demands our attention, compassion, and collective action. We can reduce the number of missing and murdered relatives by educating those around us, addressing intergenerational trauma, practicing traditional ways, and promoting healing. As we reflect on the information shared by Williams, let us embrace our shared humanity and commit to positively impacting the world around us.



GLITEC Offers Free Narcan and Narcan Training

Written by: Jake Riemer, BS



GLITEC offers **free** Narcan and Narcan training for community members and Tribal organizations. Narcan is a medication used to reverse an opioid overdose when it is occurring.

People can order Narcan kits (see photo above) from GLITEC. The kits consist of two doses of Narcan, fentanyl test strips, gloves, a barrier facemask, a CPR instruction card, a fentanyl test strip instruction card, and a Narcan instruction card. Narcan kits can be ordered by emailing Mandy Christensen at mchristensen@glitc.org. Please include how many kits you would like and the address to send them to. Please be mindful that there is a Narcan shortage in the country, so only order as many Narcan kits as needed. More Narcan kits can be re-ordered from GLITEC once your supply runs low.

GLITEC also offers free Narcan training. GLITEC staff members are certified Narcan trainers and will travel to you and your community to provide education on how opioids work in the body and how to administer Narcan. GLITEC has given Narcan training to community members, youth, teachers, and more this year. If there is a specific group you would like Narcan training for, GLITEC is happy to tailor the training specifically to that group's needs. If you, someone you know, or an organization is interested in receiving a Narcan training or more information about Narcan training, contact Jake Riemer at jriemer@glitc.org or Christina Denslinger at cdenslinger@glitc.org.

GLITEC Hosts a Gathering of Native Americans

Written by: Anthony Johnson, MS



Oneida Nation Council Member Jennifer Webster gave the opening welcome.



Oneida Nation's Buffalo Creek Singers opened each day with two songs.

GLITEC hosted a Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) on Oneida Nation land in Green Bay, Wisconsin. The goal of the GONA was to discuss healing in Tribal communities and support Tribal Nations' needs coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and into recovery. This five-day event was open to Natives in the Bemidji Area (Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Chicago). It focused on the four themes of Belonging, Mastery, Interdependence, and Generosity. The GONA was facilitated by Dr. Brian Jackson, Lashawnda Maulson, Seprieono Locario, Maria Trevizo, and Dr. Alton "Sonny" Smart.

Each day began with songs from the Buffalo Creek Singers from Oneida Nation, pipe ceremony, smudging, and a prayer. Throughout the week, there was a wall with all attendees' photos where positive affirmations were written. In the evening, there were events to attend, including a social hosted by the Oneida Nation, a performance by the Oneida Nation Hymnal Singers, traditional Oneida crafts, basket making, and the Woodland Sky Native American Dance Company performances. In addition, on the third day, men's and women's sweat lodges were available.

The first day focused on Belonging to help strengthen the sense of team and community and help everyone know they belong. Oneida Elder Dr. Artley Skenadore gave the opening and shared an Oneida creation story. Participants also began creating cultural art, such as moccasins, beadwork, dream catchers, and medicine bags. The day ended with James Vukelich giving an overview of the Ojibwe language, the Seven Generations, and the Seven Grandfather Teachings.

On the second day, the theme was also Belonging. Attendees broke into small groups and created group

banners. Then, participants spoke about the strengths of Tribal communities, which include culture, language, and community.

On the third day, attendees engaged in Mastery. This was a day to look at the negatives affecting the community, heal, and gain mastery. The morning began with a story from Ojibwe professor Sonny Smart about his life and overcoming trauma. Participants broke into small groups to create a trauma tree to address some of the traumas Natives have gone through and how to mend these.

The fourth day was about Interdependence. This was a day to strengthen working interdependently for positive change. The morning began with a story from Ho-Chunk Elder Elliot Funmaker about his life and experiencing interdependence. In small groups, attendees answered the question, "What would our community look like if we had everything we needed?" The participants identified integrated health services, including traditional methods, culture, and language, as parts of an ideal community.

On the fifth day, attendees practiced Generosity. This was a day to give back. The morning began with a story from Keith Smith about his life, work, and how he tries to help the community. The day ended with everyone receiving a gift the attendees had made on the first day and reading out their affirmations from the wall.

GLITEC hopes to host and attend similar events in the future. GLITEC would like to extend our gratitude to the Oneida Nation and their Council Member Jennifer Webster for hosting on their land and attending the GONA conference. GLITEC also wants to thank the Radisson Hotel and the others who made this GONA a success. Thank you to everyone who attended!

Resources Aim to Help Survivors of Domestic Violence

GLITEC has mailed domestic violence-related resources to health directors and more than 30 Tribal and urban Indian shelters. The mailed items included personal hygiene kits and GLITEC's [Bemidji Area Domestic Violence Resource Guide 2023](#). These resources are intended to help programs and shelters that prevent and reduce the effects of intimate partner violence.

Hygiene Kits

GLITEC sent personal hygiene kits to shelters in the Bemidji Area. These hygiene kits contain essentials that may be useful for those entering a shelter. The essentials include a toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, shaving gel, hand wash, lotion, deodorant, and a disposable razor. Additionally, the kits contain wallet cards with a QR code that links to the online version of GLITEC's *Bemidji Area Domestic Violence Resource Guide 2023*.

Updated Resource Guide

GLITEC's domestic violence resource guide was created to provide a list of available resources related to intimate partner violence in the Bemidji Area. This guide is organized by state and includes statewide resources, resources for the four urban Indian communities served by GLITEC, and resources for each Tribe (as available). In some cases, no Tribally run resources were able to be identified. In these instances, non-Tribally run resources are included. National resources are also included at the beginning of this guide. Where possible, resources and services specific to American Indian/Alaska Native people are included in this guide. This resource has been updated from the 2021 version. The 2023 version should be used to view the most up-to-date information. You can view the resource guide online at glitec.tiny.us/breakfree.

Along with print copies of the resource guide, GLITEC also mailed flyers and additional wallet cards that contain a QR code. The QR code allows people to use their phones to navigate directly to the online version of the resource guide. The flyers and wallet cards are intended to be hung or placed in restrooms or other places where people can safely navigate to the digital guide in privacy.

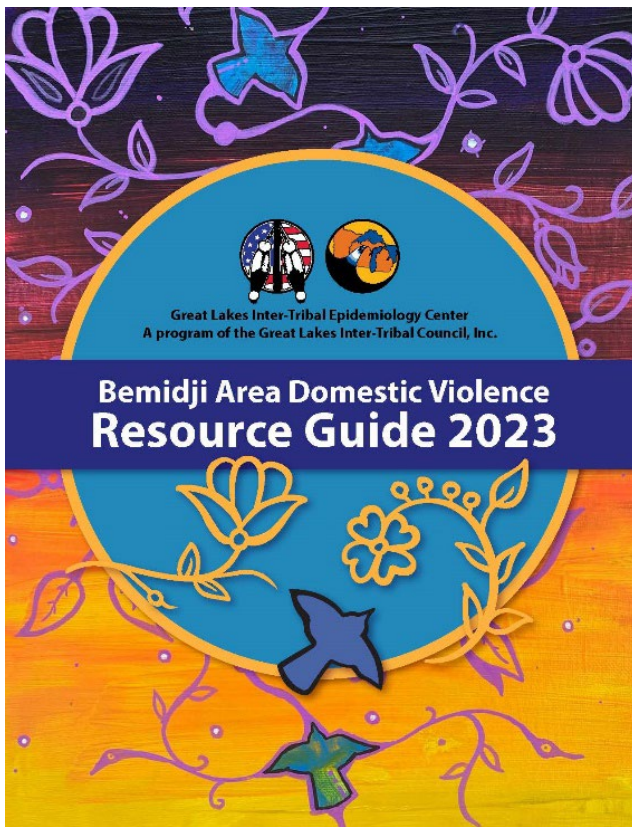
Contact Us

Contact GLITEC at gliteccommunications@glitc.org:

- to request printed copies of the resource guide, flyer, or wallet cards
- if you have a correction or addition that should be made to the resource guide during its next revision
- for more information or with questions about this project.



Each hygiene kit contains a wallet card (above) that links to a resource guide.



The 2023 version of the resource guide was mailed to more than 30 Tribal and urban Indian shelters.

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About Domestic Violence

If you or someone you know has experienced domestic violence, you are not alone. More than four out of five American Indian/Alaska Native adults are survivors of violence.¹ Compared to all races, American Indian/Alaska Native people are twice as likely to experience violent crimes.²

Domestic violence can take many different forms:³

- Isolation from others and one's community
- Pronounced gender stereotypes that play into unequal power dynamics
- Intimidation
- Manipulation, especially in situations with children
- Emotional abuse, including insults, threats, gaslighting, or humiliation
- Financial abuse
- Cultural abuse, which can include intimidation, hurtful stereotypes, or preventing someone from participating in traditions
- Spiritual abuse, which can include preventing someone from practicing spiritual beliefs or attending ceremonies or misrepresenting beliefs

Domestic violence is not traditional. Your mind, body, and spirit are sacred. You are strong and can break the cycle. Get support, make a plan, and break free.

Sources:

¹Rosay AB. Violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and men. NIJ Journal. 2016;277:38-45. Accessed April 6, 2023. <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/violence-against-american-indian-and-alaska-native-women-and-men>.

²National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center. Policy insights brief: statistics on violence against Native women. Published February 2013. Accessed April 6, 2023. https://www.ncai.org/attachments/PolicyPaper_tWAjznFslemhAffZgNGzHUqIWMPKCDjpFtxeKEUVKjubxfpGYK_Policy%20Insights%20Brief_VAW_A_020613.pdf.

³Abuse in Native American & Alaska Native communities. National Domestic Violence Hotline. Accessed April 6, 2023. <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/abuse-in-native-american-alaska-native-communities>.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a respiratory virus that affects people of all ages. RSV symptoms are usually mild and similar to having a cold. Those infected with RSV are usually contagious for three to eight days. However, some infants and people with weakened immune systems can continue to spread the virus even after they stop showing symptoms for as long as four weeks.¹ Older adults and infants younger than six months are at higher risk of developing a severe RSV infection that requires medical assistance. It is recommended that people seek medical attention if they have trouble breathing.

Children are often exposed to and infected with RSV outside the home, such as in school or child-care centers. They can then transmit the virus to other members of the family.¹ RSV spreads through person-to-person contact with someone who has an RSV infection or an object the person has touched. To slow the spread of RSV in your community, cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, wash your hands often, clean frequently touched surfaces, and avoid close contact with others.¹

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In the United States, annual community outbreaks of RSV infections typically occur during late fall, winter, and early spring; however, there may be variations in the timing of outbreaks between regions and communities in the same region.² Surveillance by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has shown a decrease in RSV infections and RSV-associated visits to the emergency department during the fall season of 2023. The number of hospitalizations in October 2023 was drastically low. However, the number of RSV-associated hospitalizations began to rise in December. RSV infections generally peak in December and January.

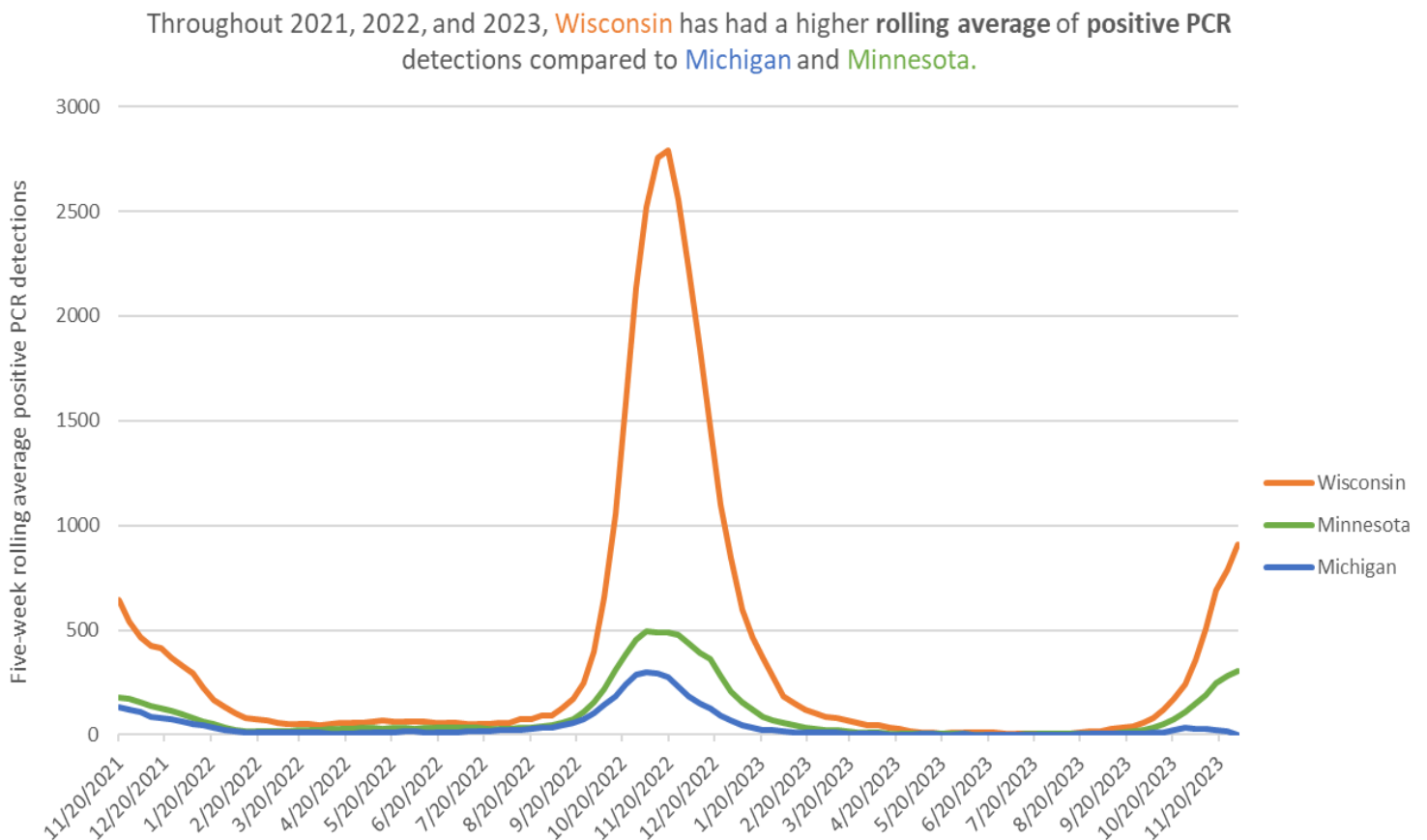
In 2023, the CDC and health experts recommended RSV vaccinations for these groups:

- **Infants:** An RSV preventive antibody has been licensed and recommended for infants.³
- **Pregnant women:** One RSV vaccine (Abrysvo by Pfizer) has been recommended during weeks 32 through 36 of pregnancy.³
- **Adults 60 and older:** Two RSV vaccines (Arexvy by GSK and Abrysvo by Pfizer) have been recommended and licensed by the FDA.³

Figures 1 and 2 below contain data from the CDC's National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS). The figures display the five-week moving average number of positive RSV detections by week (average of the four previous and current weeks) following the recommendations for assessing RSV trends by detections.² RSV can be diagnosed with either a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test or an antigen test. Figure 1 shows positive PCR detections, while Figure 2 shows antigen detections.

For more information regarding RSV, please see GLITEC's [RSV factsheet](#).

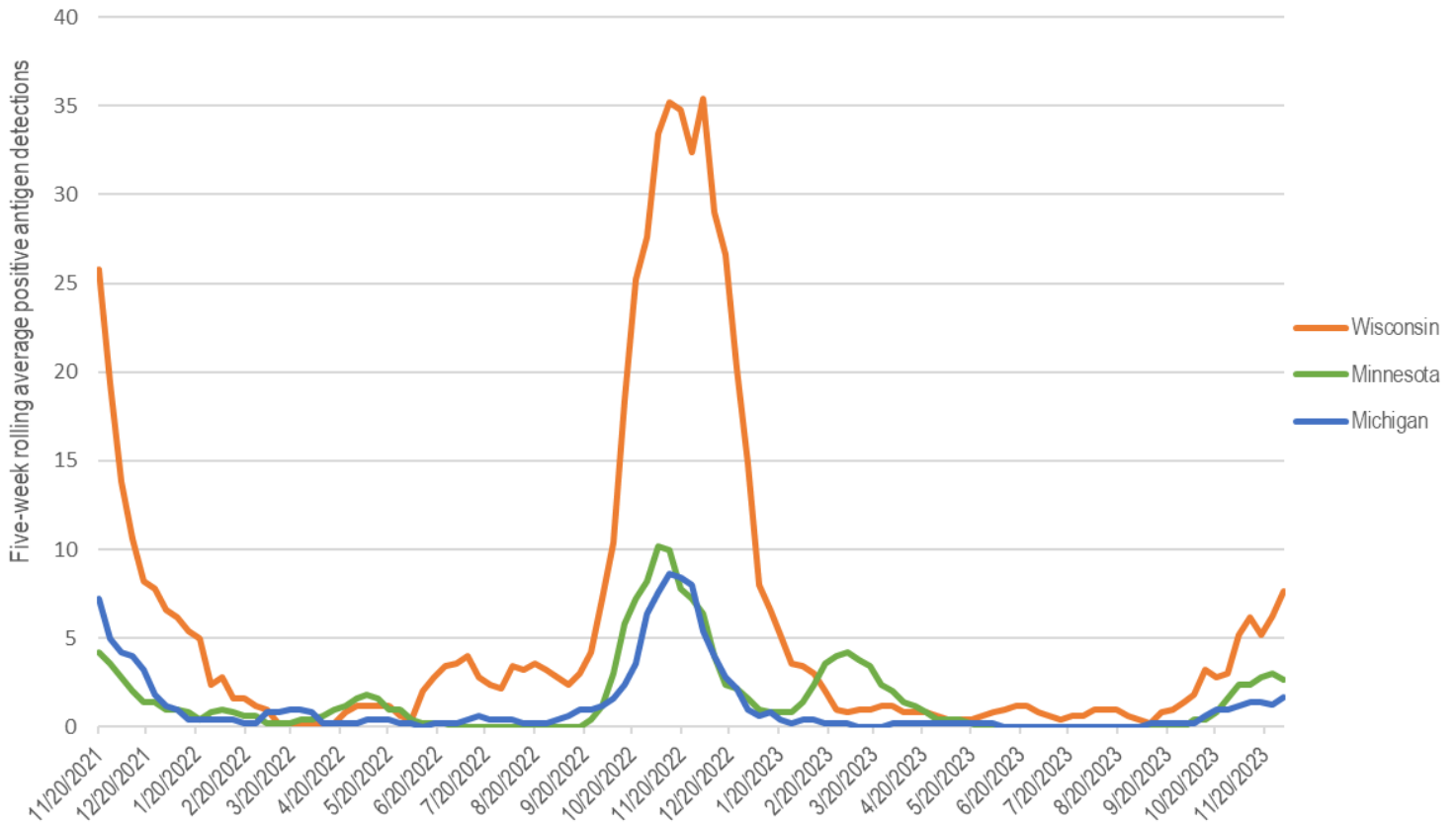
Figure 1. RSV Five-Week Rolling Average Positive PCR Detections for Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, by Week, 2021, 2022, and 2023²



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Figure 2. RSV Five-Week Rolling Average Positive Antigen Detections for Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, by Week, 2021, 2022, and 2023²

Throughout 2021 and 2022, **Wisconsin** has had a higher rolling average of positive antigen detections compared to **Michigan** and **Minnesota**. **Minnesota** had a higher rolling average in February, March, and April of 2023.



Sources:

- ¹Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Updated November 21, 2023. Accessed December 12, 2023. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/rsv.htm>
- ²RSV state trends. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published December 7, 2023. Accessed December 12, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/surveillance/nrvss/rsv/state.html>
- ³National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published November 7, 2023. Accessed December 13, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html>



Stay Active This Winter With Powwow Dance Aerobics



Staying active is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. This can be challenging when winter weather makes it unsafe or uncomfortable to be outside. GLITEC's fitness video called [Powwow Dance Aerobics: Dance Your Way to Fitness](#) can help on these days and throughout the year. This video is intended to be a fitness program for Native people in a format that is innovative, effective, culturally appropriate, and accessible to all of Indian Country.

The fitness program features Dallas Arcand and Aerobics Artists Chanelle Monroe and Shanley Spence. Dallas, a three-time World Champion Hoop Dancer from the Alexander First Nation (Kipohtakaw) Treaty 6 in Alberta, Canada, brings together powwow dancing, aerobics, and fitness to lead participants through this program. This fitness program is geared toward people of all skill levels and is suitable for all ages, from toddlers to Elders.

The program is completed in four parts (warm up, stretch and meditation, workout, and cool down) and contains four main sections:

- an introduction of Dallas, Shanley, and Chanelle
- beginner- to advanced-level fitness program
- dance performances by Dallas, Shanley, and Chanelle
- flute song performance by Dallas.

How to Access the Program

The fitness program is available in multiple formats:

- Online via YouTube: <https://youtu.be/VTLvb9Q1n18>
- DVD
- Flash drive

Contact GLITEC at gliteccommunications@glitc.org to request a copy of the DVD or a flash drive.

Submit Your Feedback

Participants are encouraged to complete a three-minute survey to share their experiences with this program. Everyone who does so will receive a **free T-shirt** (shown below) while supplies last.

A paper survey is located inside the DVD case along with a pre-stamped envelope to send the survey to GLITEC. For an electronic survey, scan the QR code with your phone or visit

<https://glitec.tiny.us/PowwowFitnessSurvey>.



Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center



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<https://www.glitc.org/programs/epidemiology-and-education/>

Our Mission

To support Tribal communities in their efforts to improve health by assisting with data needs through partnership development, community-based research, education, and technical assistance.

Bison (or Beef) Stew



Ingredients:

- 2 stalks celery
- 2 carrots
- 1 can stewed tomatoes
- 2 lbs. buffalo (or beef) stew meat
- 4 quarts water
- 2 lbs. red or white potatoes (not russets)
- 1 cup barley

Cooking Instructions:

1. Slice the celery, carrots, and meat into cubes about 1 inch long.
2. Brown the meat over high heat for about three minutes.
3. Add the carrots, water, and potatoes to a large pot and boil until tender.
4. Add the celery, tomatoes, and barley, and let it cook for another five minutes or so.
5. Pour the veggies and meat into a baking dish and place in the oven at 425 degrees F for 30 minutes.
6. Enjoy!

Source: littlethings.com