

# YES! Newsletter

Youth Enjoy Science

## September 2022 Newsletter Volume 9

University of Nebraska Medical Center, Munroe-Meyer Institute, Eppley Institute and College of Public Health

### Cancer Preventive, Healthful Diet

Following the below dietary recommendations can help prevent cancer:

- Eating whole grains, vegetables, fruit, and beans or lentils
- Limiting how much fast or processed foods you eat
- Limiting how much red and processed meat you eat
- Limiting sugar-sweetened and alcoholic drinks

Source: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

#### Newsletter Committee:

Regina Idoate  
Joyce Solheim  
Misty Pocwierz-Gaines  
Aislinn Rookwood  
Liliana Bronner  
Maurice Godfrey



#### MEDICATIONS

proven to reduce risk of breast and colon cancers in those at increased risk.



#### LIFESTYLE CHOICES

such as avoid or quit tobacco, limit alcohol, avoid known carcinogens, keep active & avoid obesity.



#### TREATMENTS FOR INFECTIONS

known to increase cancer risk, including hepatitis C, HIV, and H. pylori.



#### SCREENING TESTS

that allow removal of precancerous lesions, such as colon polyps.



#### VACCINES TO PROTECT

against infection with human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis B.



#### SURGERY

to remove tissues at risk, such as for women with increased risk of breast and ovarian cancer.



prevention.cancer.gov  
NCI Division of Cancer Prevention

## Upcoming Cancer Awareness Months

Getting involved in or starting local campaigns to help raise awareness and funds for different cancer types can help fight cancer in our community. Below is a list of upcoming cancer awareness months to help you find local events to get involved in.

#### September

- Childhood Cancer
- Leukemia and Lymphoma
- Ovarian Cancer
- Prostate Cancer
- Thyroid Cancer
- Uterine Cancer

#### October

- Breast Cancer
- Liver Cancer
- Nebraska Cancer Action Network

#### November

- Carcinoid Cancer
- Gastric Cancer
- Lung Cancer
- Pancreatic Cancer

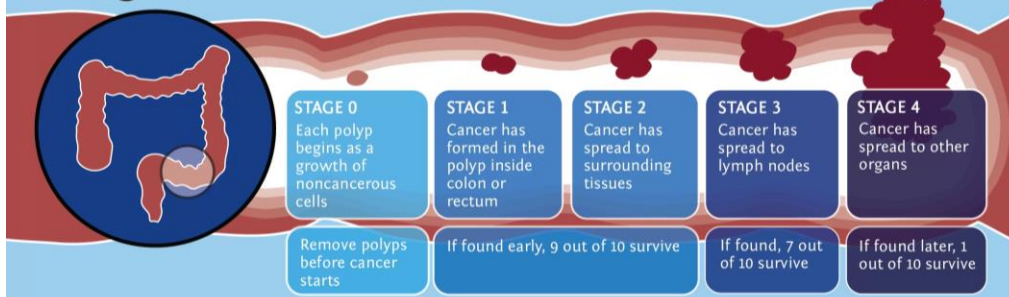
# Free Colorectal Cancer Screening Programs

## End Colon Cancer ▶▶▶▶ in Indian Country

### What is colon cancer?

A disease in the large intestine (colon) and rectum. Most colon cancers start as small noncancerous clumps of cells called polyps. Without treatment, polyps may turn cancerous.

### Stages of colon cancer



TIMING MATTERS WHEN COLON CANCER IS FOUND

### What can I do?



QUIT SMOKING



EAT FRUITS & VEGGIES



WEIGHT CONTROL



GET SCREENED



EXERCISE



LIMIT ALCOHOL USE



Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death for American Indians and Alaska Natives.



Colon cancer often has no symptoms in early stages.

### Screening tests

Colon cancer screening for American Indians is recommended for those ages 45-75

#### ▶ STOOL-BASED TESTS

- Looks for blood in the stool
- Take test at home every 1-3 years
- Mail or return to clinic
- If positive, must have colonoscopy

#### ▶ VISUAL TESTS

- Looks directly in the colon
- Test is done at a medical center
- Colonoscopy can prevent cancer by removal of polyps during test

Talk to your health care provider about when screening is best for you.

## In Nebraska

Colorectal Cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosis in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities. Nebraska has low screening rates for Colorectal cancer. The Nebraska Colon Cancer Screening Program offers free colon cancer screening. This program includes screening and education for Nebraska men and women who are 45-74 years of age.\*

\*The Nebraska Colon Cancer Screening Program has changed its screening age from 50 years of age to 45 in order to fall in line with the 2021 U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations.

More information about this program can be found here: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Colon-Screening.aspx>

## In South Dakota

**GET SCREENED SD**  
Stop Colorectal Cancer.

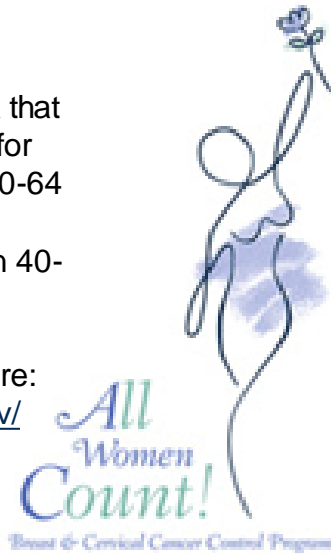
Colorectal Cancer has nearly a 100% survival rate if caught early through routine screening. GetScreenedSD is a statewide program to promote accessible Colorectal Cancer screening, such as at home tests (FluFIT) and transportation assistance to medical appointments. More information about this program can be found here: <https://getscreened.sd.gov/screened/index.aspx>

Infographic Source: American Indian Cancer Foundation

# Free Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening Programs

## In South Dakota

All Women Count! is a program in South Dakota that provides reimbursement for pap smears for women 30-64 years of age and mammograms for women 40-64 years of age. More information about this program can be found here: <https://getscreened.sd.gov/count/>



## In Arizona



The Well Woman HealthCheck program is a program in Arizona that provides uninsured and underinsured women 40-64 years of age with breast cancer screening and women 21-64 years of age with cervical screening. More information about this program can be found here:

<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Colon-Screening.aspx>

## In Nebraska

*Every Woman Matters*



Every Woman Matters (EWM) is a federally funded program in the state of Nebraska that provides free breast, cervical, and uterine cancer screening. This includes covering the cost of office visits associated with Pap tests, pelvic exams, clinical breast exams, mammography, some diagnostic tests, and lab fees. More information about this program can be found here:

<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Every-Woman-Matters.aspx>

**1 in 8** women will get breast cancer in their lifetime

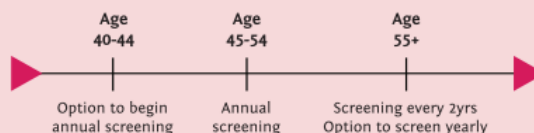
### Increased Risks

- GENDER**  
Being female
- GENETICS**  
Inherited DNA changes in genes
- FAMILY HISTORY**  
Mother, sister, daughter has had breast cancer
- BREAST DENSITY**  
High density breasts
- AGE**  
Getting older

CONTACT YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER IF YOU HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THESE RISKS

Breast cancer usually has no symptoms when the tumor is small and most treatable.

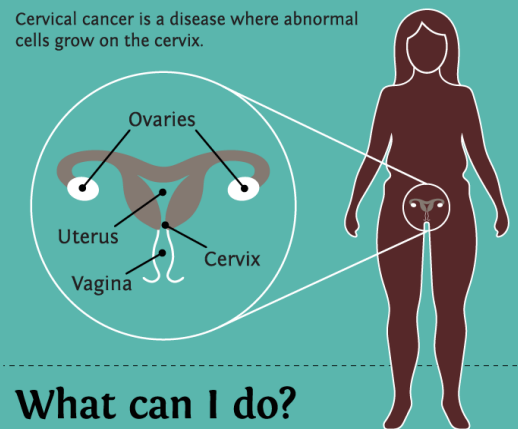
### Screening Guidelines/Recommendations



Infographics Source: American Indian Cancer Foundation

## What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is a disease where abnormal cells grow on the cervix.



## What can I do?

- GET VACCINATED**  
The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is recommended for everyone ages 9-26 to protect against HPV cases that lead to 9 out of 10 cervical cancers. [Learn more at: AICAF.org/hpv](http://AICAF.org/hpv)
- PRACTICE SMART SEX**  
Use protection and talk with your sexual partners: anyone who has ever had anal, vaginal or oral sex can get HPV.
- QUIT SMOKING**  
Smoking weakens the immune system, making it harder for the body to fight HPV infection. [Learn more at: AICAF.org/quit](http://AICAF.org/quit)
- GET SCREENED**  
Cervical cancer is highly curable when detected and treated early.

## YES! WISH Chaperone Highlight



Melissa Leon, M.P.H., has a Bachelor of Science in Food Science & Human Nutrition from the University of Florida and a Master of Public

Health in Community-Oriented Primary Care from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She has completed research training through UNMC's NIH Cancer Epidemiology Education in Special Populations and the Munroe Meyers Institute's Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disorders programs. As the Comparative Effectiveness Research Program Manager, she focuses on developing campus-wide collaboration with faculty, staff, students, and trainees. As a third-year doctoral student in the MSIA Health Practice & Medical Education Research program, she is interested in racial equity, surgical disparities, and health systems changes that strengthen our community.



Christopher Marshall works closely with students at Omaha Public School's Native Indigenous Centered Education (N.I.C.E.) program.

He attended college at Haskell Indian Nations University and earned a degree in Media Communications. He is currently enrolled at Midland University and is working on his Special Education teaching degree. Christopher is a prolific filmmaker, youth group coordinator, and a loving father and husband.

# College of Public Health YES! Mentor Highlight



**Aislinn**



**Aziz**

**Aislinn Rookwood, M.P.H.**, is a public health researcher with interests in environmental justice, cancer, exposure assessment, community-engaged research, and research workforce development. She is currently in her third year of her doctoral program in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research in the College of Public Health. She has experience in environmental toxicology assisting on projects investigating occupational exposures to carcinogens and mechanisms of disease. Ms. Rookwood also works on projects investigating the relationship between exposures to environmental carcinogens and specific cancer types and determining the readiness to address cancer through community-engaged research approaches.

**Adily "Aziz" A. Abdoulaziz, M.S., M.P.H.**, is from Niger, currently at his final year of Ph.D. Global Climate Change and Health, and a Research Assisant at UNMC. He completed a dual Master Program in Emergency Preparedness; Environmental and Occupational Health at UNMC. His research interest is the impact of heat stress on human health. Before joining UNMC, Abdoulaziz was working at the United Nations World Food Program (UNWFP) as an Operations Officer since 2012. Before the United Nations, he worked with the International Federation for Red Cross (IFRC) as Finance and Administration Manager (2005 – 2007) where his collaboration contributed to the control of the severe food crisis in the Sahel. From 2009 to 2011, he has worked with the United States International Relief and Development (IRD – US) as Director of Finance and Administration. In IRD – US, he was in charge of financial activities for operations related to monetization and nutrition programs in Niger.

# SHPEP-YES WISH Program

Nine high school students with Native American ancestry from Nebraska and South Dakota participated in the National Cancer Institute-funded Youth Enjoy Science Weeklong Institute for Students in High School (YES WISH) program at UNMC from June 26th to July 2nd. This program exposed students to the fields of public health, biomedical sciences, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, and medicine with a focus on cancer research. Students toured the campuses of the University of Nebraska-Omaha, University of Nebraska Medical Center, and Creighton University. Through this program, the students gained insight into the life of college students, research opportunities and health professions education programs. This week-long summer program is a part of the larger Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP) program for undergraduate students funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



University of Nebraska  
Medical Center  
Public Health  
YES! Mentors



**Dr. Evi Farazi** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and the Tim Hawks Chair in Cancer Prevention and Population Science in the UNMC College of Public Health. Her research focuses on gastrointestinal cancers and diet-induced liver cancer. Dr. Farazi previously mentored YES Research Scholar, Erica Lafferty.



**Dr. Jesse Bell** is an Associate Professor in the UNMC Department of Environmental, Agricultural, and Occupational Health, Associate Professor in the UNL IANR, and the Claire M. Hubbard Professor of Water, Climate, and Health Chair. His research explores the relationships of extreme weather, climate variability, and climate change on natural and human processes. Dr. Bell currently mentors Bryce Johnson and Carlee Rigatuso.

# YES! Mentor Highlight Meet Dr. Regina Idoate



**Dr. Regina Idoate** is an Indigenous health researcher, an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and an Assistant Professor of Health Promotion in the College of Public Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Dr. Idoate employs Indigenous research methods to study cancer control and population health through culturally relevant socio-ecological approaches to community-based health. She engages scientists and communities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, in blending Western science with Indigenous knowledge to foster health equity, promote community well-being

and advance the health of minority populations, particularly Native Americans.

### **Dr. Idoate's Research Interests:**

American Indian/Alaska Native Health Disparities, Maternal and Child Health, Cancer Prevention, Community Systems for Health, Medical Humanities

### **Describe your research in 25 words or less.**

My research blends Western science with Indigenous to better understand the causes of health and health care disparities in ways that inform and improve interventions to reduce these disparities.

### **Best advice for YES cancer researcher interns?**

Take time to consider how your ways of being, ways of doing and ways of knowing make your research meaningful.

### **Why did you choose to become a YES mentor?**

I believe in Native youth. I believe in Indigenous Health Sovereignty. And, I believe that mentoring future generations of Native scientists helps Native Peoples achieve Indigenous health sovereignty.

### **What do you like to do in addition to research?**

I love spending time with the Creator, my family and my community through gardening, dancing, running, hiking, eating, praying, playing, participating in ceremony and teaching and learning through language, art, science and stories.

### **What is a common misconception about research?**

I think that it is a misconception that Indigenous and Western research paradigms and methods cannot work together.

# Two YES Research Scholars pursuing Graduate School

Bobbie McWilliams-Leesley (Osage Nation) graduated with her Bachelor of Arts in Art and Art History from the University of Nebraska-Omaha. As a YES Research Scholar, Ms. McWilliams-Leesley worked with mentor Dr. Regina Idoate conducting research in the areas of health promotion, and cancer education. Bobbie contributed to three publications. She will be continuing on to pursue a Master's in Arts in History at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. She plans to continue promoting cancer education with Native American communities, incorporating historical and Indigenous perspectives.



*To the Left: Erica Lafferty; To the Right: Bobbie McWilliams-Leesley*

Erica Lafferty (Yankton Sioux) graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Natural Science from Ogalala Lakota College. During her participation in the YES Research Internship, she worked with Dr. Evi Farazi and her lab on a project investigating how specific molecules may contribute to non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH)-related Hepatocellular Carcinoma. She is continuing her education at the South Dakota State University pursuing a Master's in Science in Biology.

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## Omaha Urban Heat Watch Project

Heat kills more Americans annually than any other weather-related event, but not everyone's risk is the same. Mapping geographic heat inequities was the goal of the Omaha Urban Heat Watch Project, a community-led campaign conducted by the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) College of Public Health and Water, Climate and Health Program on August 6th. The project was sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the interagency National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NIHHIS), and CAPA Strategies LLC. Omaha is one of 14 U.S. cities participating in the 2022 Heat Mapping Campaign. The project is part of a larger effort by NOAA and NIHHIS to raise awareness about extreme heat and urban heat islands. The Omaha Urban Heat Watch Project was led by Dr. Jesse Bell and Ph.D. student, Abdoulaziz Abdoulaye. Aislinn Rookwood and YES! Research Interns, Carlee Rigatuso and Bryce Johnson, were a part of the research team assisting with door-to-door community outreach to raise awareness about the campaign, youth training at the Simple Foundation, driving routes to determine any potential concerns for campaign day, campaign day logistics, and collecting heat measurements on campaign day. Partner organizations included NOAA, NIHHIS, the National Weather Service, the YES! program, and The Simple Foundation.

The hottest spots of cities are typically in underserved communities. A key focus of the project is to compare heat distribution in areas of Omaha that were redlined in the 1900s to areas that were not historically segregated to determine where heat inequities exist. Using heat sensors mounted on their own cars, volunteers navigated their neighborhoods in the morning, afternoon, and evening on the hot August day. The sensors recorded temperature, humidity, time, and geographic coordinates every second. Bell and Abdoulaye hope the results can be used to develop heat action plans, add cooling stations to bus shelters, educate residents and policymakers and inform new research.



*Volunteers on Campaign Day installing a heat Sensor on a car*



# NIH SciEd 2022 returns to Washington DC

Following a two year pause in in-person meetings, the NIH Science Education Conference reconvened in Washington, DC from May 31 to June 3, 2022. It was great to see so many friends and colleagues in person, make new friends, and learn about new and exciting science education and outreach projects. The biggest news from the meeting was the lifting of the cap of only one Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) program per institution. About six years ago, SEPA found a permanent home in NIH's National Institute of General Medical Sciences. At about the same time, the National Cancer Institute launched its Youth Enjoy Science (YES!) initiative. This was the first time in almost a decade that NIH had more than one institute with pre-college or general public programs. A few months ago (leading up to the July 2022 SEPA deadline) most institutes at NIH had signed up to help to increase outreach across all biomedical science programs at NIH. It was this increase in interest and likely, funding, that has allowed the cap of one SEPA per institution to be lifted. Therefore, we at UNMC are now planning several new programs to serve our partner schools and communities best.

As in previous years the conference was divided into several strands:

- Broadening Participation Strand
- Curriculum Development Strand
- Informal Science Education Strand
- Interactive Multimedia for STEM Learning Strand
- Project Administration Strand
- Research and Evaluation Strand
- Research Experiences for Students and Teachers Strand
- Science Teaching and Learning Strand
- Teacher Professional Development Strand

Various SEPA and YES projects presented their work and plans to continue and expand programming as we move from these pandemic years.

A Keynote address by Dr. Romuladus E. Azuine focused on the All of Us research project and the big data that is generated in these types of projects. SEPA and YES programs should ensure that training or focusing on data and large sets of information are included in their engagement with students and the public.



*Brittany Strong, YES! Educational Consultant, and Hannah-Butler Robbins, former YES! Research Intern, presented a poster on behalf of the YES program sharing evaluation of programming.*

Dr. Carla Easter's Keynote address focused on the using cultural institutions, in her case the Smithsonian Institution, as an ally in engaging students and the public in issues of science. Dr. Easter had spent many years at the National Human Genome Research Institute and developed an exhibit for the Smithsonian on our common ancestry. That exhibit is now touring across the country.

A most interesting Keynote address was given by Dr. Teresa Blankmeyer Burke from Gallaudet University. Gallaudet University is the premiere institution for deaf people. Her inspirational talk focused on working with and education deaf scientists. A new SEPA program from Baylor University in Waco, Texas was introduced, and their focus is working with blind students and bringing science to people with visual impairments.

The SEPA and YES tents are broad indeed. Partnering with many diverse programs across the country is feasible given current technology and interest in presenting exciting and novel science education to as many people as possible. Our UNMC YES! and SEPA programs are prepared to do the same.

Finally, the next in-person NIH Science Education Conference will be held May 30 to June 2, 2023, in Washington, DC. The UNMC YES! and SEPA programs invite a teacher to come to the conference with us. If you are interested, please let us know.



# YES! Outstanding Research & Creative Activity Award Winner – Promise Moore-Saufley



Ms. Promise Moore-Saufley is an undergraduate student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She has been a participant in the National Cancer Institute-funded Youth Enjoy Science (YES) Research Education Program for Native American students at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) continuously since 2020. Promise's heritage in the Native American community traces to the Sioux (Rosebud Reservation).

In the YES Program, Promise's first research project combined her interests in psychology and cancer research and resulted in a co-authorship for her on a presentation at the online International Cancer Education Conference (ICEC) Integrating Culture, Spirituality, and Social Support into Cancer Education to Improve Health Equity meeting (held October 12-16, 2021). The presentation on which she was a co-author was entitled, "Impact of a Canvas-Based Course on the Scientific Professional Identity Development of Summer Undergraduate Participants in an Online Cancer Research Experience." In 2021, Promise also applied for, and received, a competitively awarded Travel Scholarship to attend the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) National Diversity in STEM (NDiSTEM) Conference.

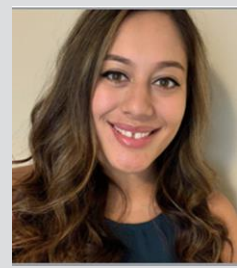
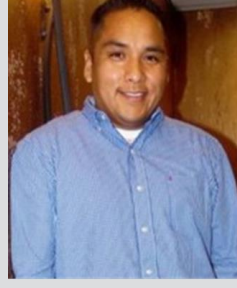
Promise has been involved in YES Program intern group activities, including attending Zoom presentations and discussions led by UNMC Cancer Research Program graduate students on a large assortment of cancer education topics, ranging from the biochemical origins of cancer to clinical trials for cancer. She has also participated with other YES Program cancer research interns in sessions led by Dr. Joyce Solheim (a Professor in the UNMC Eppley Institute and one of the YES Program Principal Investigators) in which the interns worked as a team to design vignettes featuring fictional Native American characters experiencing specific types of cancer. The vignettes showed how the characters' experiences with cancer diagnoses, treatments, and outcomes interwove with their family relationships, education, careers, and sometimes with aspects of their own Native culture.

In addition to her continued involvement in the YES Program, Promise also demonstrated her dedication to research through her efforts as a UNMC Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) Scholar in 2022. Her SURP project results showed that a chemotherapy drug used for pancreatic cancer patient treatment increases the vulnerability of the cancer cells to be attacked by the patients' immune system. At the culmination of her research, she presented a poster on which she was the first author, entitled, "Gemcitabine Influences Tumor Peptide Presentation in Pancreatic Cancer," at the SURP Scholar Poster Forum in the UNMC Truhlsen Events Center. Promise will also be presenting her poster from her SURP research in November 2022 in the online Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists (ABRCMS) Annual Conference. During her involvement with the YES Program and SURP, Promise has shown that she has excellent interpersonal communication skills, can rapidly learn pertinent research techniques, and retains a positive and cooperative attitude with research team members at all times. She has great devotion to achieving a health-related graduate degree and career, and her determination, intellect, and hard work will ensure that she will be successful.



# AMERICAN INDIAN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING SOCIETY

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## Join AISES Today!

AISES supports K-12, undergrad and graduate students in STEM and Healthcare studies through mentorship, scholarships & community building events.

### Member Benefits!

**Career Development**  
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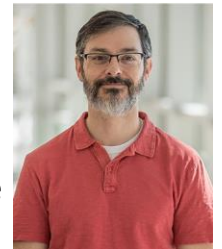
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### Contact AISES:

<https://www.aises.org/membership>

**Omaha Student Advisor:** Scot Ouellette  
[scot.ouellette@unmc.edu](mailto:scot.ouellette@unmc.edu)



### Nebraska AISES Program Partners



Bluebird Cultural Initiative

AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM



**SEPA** SCIENCE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP AWARD  
Supported by the National Institutes of Health

University of Nebraska Medical Center  
BREAKTHROUGHS FOR LIFE™



# Promoting Inclusive Climates & Addressing Discrimination in Health Professions Education (IRB #0122-22-EX)

## SEEKING FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

FOR RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

**A GIFT CARD WILL BE PROVIDED**

YOU ARE ELIGIBLE IF YOU IDENTIFY AS:

- AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE
- BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
- NATIVE HAWAIIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER
- LATINX
- CURRENT STUDENT, EARLY CAREER FACULTY MEMBER, OR ALUMNI OF A HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATION PROGRAM

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
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UA Cancer Center

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Associate Professor  
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khastings@email.arizona.edu

# Upcoming Events

**MCC 31st Annual Fort Omaha VIRTUAL Intertribal Powwow**  
Metropolitan Community College (visit [mccneb.edu/powwow](http://mccneb.edu/powwow))  
Monday, September 19<sup>th</sup> - Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022

**YES! IResearch Club Field Trip**  
University of Nebraska Medical Center, College of Public Health  
Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**2022 AISES National Conference**  
**45 Years of Advancing Indigenous People in STEM**  
Palm Springs, California  
Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup> – Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

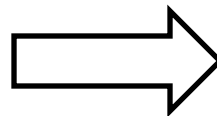
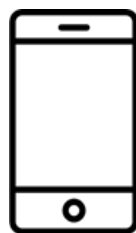
**International Cancer Education Conference**  
The Hotel at University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland  
Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup> – Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**UNO Native American Student Exhibition titled "Resilience"**  
University of Nebraska Omaha, Weber Fine Arts Building  
Monday, October 10<sup>th</sup> – Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
*Closing reception November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, from 5:00-7:00 pm CST*

**UNO Rock Your Mocs**  
University of Nebraska Omaha, Milo Bail Student Center Atrium  
Wednesday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, from 12:00-1:30 pm CST

## Announcements

Please complete the YES! Stakeholder Survey to provide us with valuable and feedback into how we can better serve you!  
<https://forms.office.com/r/rWUJHZxpGx> [[forms.office.com](https://forms.office.com)]



Please note that all responses are anonymous and will be used to provide the YES! Team with opportunities for improvement.

