

Native Voices Bookmark

Native Voices: Native Peoples' Concepts of Health and Illness: An Exhibition

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Native Voices: Native Peoples' Concepts of Health and Illness is a unique exhibition currently on view at the National Library of Medicine, on the Bethesda, Maryland campus of the National Institutes of Health. It examines health and medicine among contemporary American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, and explores the connection between wellness, illness, and cultural life through a combination of interviews, artwork, objects, and interactive media.

Honoring the Native tradition of oral history, NLM has gathered a multitude of healing voices from across the country so that you can hear their stories in their own words. Healers, elders, and other key figures describe how epidemics, loss of land, and the inhibition of culture in the 19th and 20th centuries affect the health of Native individuals and communities today. Still, there are encouraging signs. *Native Voices* presents an inspiring story of renaissance, recovery, and self-determination, and shows how the Native Peoples of the U.S. use both traditional and Western methods to enhance health and wellness.

Exhibition topics include:

- Native views and definitions of health and illness;
- Native views of the Land, Food, Community, the Earth/Nature, and Spirituality as they relate to Native health and illness;
- The role of traditional healing in Native American culture today;
- The role of traditional healing in American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian history;
- The relationship of traditional healing and Western medicine in Native communities;
- Native stories about the practice of healing;
- The role of Native Americans in military service as an element of pride, honor, and commitment to tribe and country, and healing support for returning Native veterans;
- Native economic and cultural issues that affect the health of Native communities; and

- Current work by Native communities to improve their health conditions.

On exhibit is a ten-foot model of the Hokule`a voyaging canoe that has significant historical and healing importance and a healing totem carved by Lummi Indian master carver Jewell James, the sculptor of totem poles honoring the victims of the 9/11 tragedy.

Visitor Information

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The Native Voices App is available for download from the Apple App Store.

The *Native Voices* exhibition has been developed by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine.

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