

MAY 2018 VOLUME I - ISSUE 4

OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
FOR THE  
SISSETON-WAHPETON OYATE

# Tribal Research Office

## Did you know...

RESEARCH is more than scientists in lab coats running tests? It also includes the following:

- Survey and questionnaires
  - Interviews and focus groups
  - Analyses of existing data or biological specimens
  - Epidemiological studies
  - Evaluations of social or educational programs
  - Medical chart review studies
- Research is any data collection involving human subjects.

### What are HUMAN SUBJECTS?

A human subject is a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual; or (2) identifiable private information. So in simple terms, human subjects are the people who choose to participate in research studies and are being researched.

Any time data is collected on human subjects on the Lake Traverse Reservation, it is considered research and it falls under the authority of the SWO Chapter 77 "Research Codes."

We welcome your comments, suggestions, and concerns.

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## Research Updates

From Heather Larsen, Research Specialist

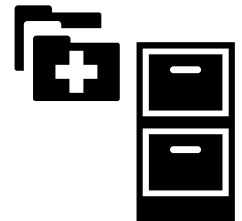


### Research Project recently completed on the Lake Traverse Reservation

In April the Local Research Review Board (LRRB) closed out a research project titled, "Maternal Substance Use during Pregnancy among Mothers of American Indian Infants". In 2016, SWO requested an Epi Aid from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to determine the extent of drug use during pregnancy on our Reservation. It was implemented in collaboration with the Great Plains Tribal Epidemiology Center, the South Dakota, North Dakota, and Minnesota Departments of Health, birthing hospitals, IHS, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, South Dakota State University and others.

Fieldwork was completed by a team that came for three weeks during August 2016 and abstracted 511 birth records for SWO mothers at private hospitals for the period 2013 - 2015. What we learned is that not all mothers were drug-tested (or else not documented in the medical record). Of the 511 records abstracted, 315 (62%) had evidence of a urine drug screen in their medical record. Since urine drug screen confirmatory testing was not consistently performed, results are indicative of a problem but not substantiated. Meconium testing is the "gold standard" for determining with accuracy the extent of drug use during pregnancy. However, among all 511 births, infant meconium was tested for only 13% (67 infants). In addition, follow-up interviews with birthing hospitals by the CDC indicated no formal policies existed for determining which infants would be tested. While MOST mothers did not use drugs, marijuana was by far the most common positive result for those that did, followed by opioids, amphetamines, and benzodiazepines.

The final report provides eleven recommendations medical providers should consider, including more systematic and evidence-based methods of assessing substance use during pregnancy, obtaining informed consent from patients for screening, timely referral for substance use disorder treatment, and diligent data-collection for ongoing surveillance and monitoring of this important public health issue. The recommendations will be discussed with stakeholders this summer in order to improve patient care services.



These Dakota values guide our process:

**Woodbdeza**  
(Observation)

**Wowicake**  
(Truth)

**Woohoda**  
(Respect)

**Wowoonsida**  
(Compassion)

**Woksape**  
(Wisdom)

# Highlight of a Local Research Review Board (LRRB) member

In this month's newsletter, we are highlighting another member of our Local Research Review Board. Sara DeCoteau, B.A. has been a member of the LRRB since its inception in 2014. Sara is an honorary member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate. She is the SWO Health Coordinator and in August will have worked for the Tribe for 42 years plus two years as a VISTA Volunteer. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Human Services and Management from the University of Minnesota, Morris. Sara has worked with various national, state, regional and tribal health organizations, including the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Health Board, Governor's Task Force on Infant Mortality, South Dakota Health Care Solutions Coalition, SWO Interagency In Home Care Team, Community Safety Team, Behavioral Health Interagency Team and First 1,000 Days Initiative Interagency Forum. She has been involved with several health related research projects, including Cavity-Free in 2-0-1-3 and Patterns of Cancer Care. In addition, she has served as the Principal Investigator for two research projects approved by the LRRB: the Pregnancy Health Survey for Parents of Newborns on the Lake Traverse Reservation and the Centers for Disease Control Epi-Aid: Substance Use During Pregnancy among American Indian Mothers. Sara was drawn to serve on the LRRB because of her interest in SWO specific health data and its uses in monitoring and improving health locally. We are grateful for Sara's expertise on the board!



Coming up:  
Next month's issue will highlight another LRRB member so you can continue to learn about our board and their background.

## Mission

The current mission of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Research Office is to enhance the tribal research infrastructure by continuing to build the research review capacity, education through community engagement, and exercising tribal sovereignty through research data management. The main objective of the Tribal Research Office is to improve the overall status of all Tribal members through relevant, tailored, and culturally sensitive research as outlined in the SWO Code Chapter 77 - "SWO Research Code."

