

2019 NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH LECTURE

IMPROVING AMERICAN INDIAN AND
ALASKA NATIVE HEALTH THROUGH **RESEARCH**

GUEST SPEAKER Melissa Walls, Ph.D.

Bois Forte and Couchiching
First Nation Anishinaabe Bands

Director

Great Lakes Hub for the Johns Hopkins Center for
American Indian Health

Associate Professor

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health



Substance use and mental health challenges have been identified as major public health concerns linked to decreased quality of life and life expectancy across America. These challenges disproportionately affect some Indigenous communities, yet existing data reveal high rates of abstinence and recovery among Indigenous people. Using data from NIH funded studies, this lecture will describe trajectories of early life course substance use, mental health challenges, and enduring mental health among Indigenous people in North America. Through recognition of Tribal sovereignty and the use of Tribally-based participatory approaches, research can serve as a valuable tool that highlights the value of within-culture studies, informs preventive interventions, and creates new narratives about Indigenous healthy living and well-being.

Dr. Walls works in collaboration with American Indian and First Nations communities to identify key drivers of community health. She and her team translate research outcomes to influence the development of culturally relevant policies and programs that improve the health of Indigenous communities. Her involvement in community-based participatory research projects includes mental health epidemiology; culturally-relevant, family-based substance use prevention, and mental health promotion programming and evaluation; and examining the effects of stress and mental health on diabetes.

Dr. Walls is a principal investigator for NIH Research Project Grants, a member of the National Advisory Council on Drug Abuse, and a mentor to American Indian students. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln after serving as a National Institute of Mental Health Ruth Kirschstein National Research Service Award Predoctoral Fellow. She was recognized by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as an Interdisciplinary Research Leader.

WHEN

Monday, November 18, 2019
1:30p.m. - 2:30p.m. (ET)

LOCATION

NIH Main Campus
Bethesda, MD
Wilson Hall,
Building 1, 3rd Floor

HOSTED BY

[NIH Tribal Health
Research Office \(THRO\)](#)

The NIH THRO invites you to join us in celebrating 2019 National Native American Heritage Month (NNAHM). This year's special guest lecturer is Dr. Melissa Walls, Director of the Great Lakes Hub for the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health and Associate Professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

David R. Wilson, Ph.D.
Director
Tribal Health Research Office
Office of the Director

Individuals with disabilities who need reasonable accommodation to participate in this event should contact Karen Hughes: karen.hughes@nih.gov, 301-402-9852, and/or the Federal Relay (1-800-877-8339)

**Watch the NNAHM
lecture online**



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