

# COPE 2019

## ANNUAL REPORT



GROWTH THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS







# *Indigenizing Health through Community Empowerment*



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# Message from the Board

Dear Friends of COPE,

As we complete a decade of working toward our mission of overturning health inequities in Native communities, we have an opportunity to reflect on the power of strong partnerships that have brought us here. Our tribal and community partners continue to inform each step of our work, while institutions and generous individuals provide the support that pushes us to co-develop innovative programming.

Looking back at 2019 reminds me of a quote from Zora Neal Hurston, “there are years that ask questions and years that answer.” Recent years have brought up exciting questions about growth at COPE, and 2019 has answered with a new Executive Director for COPE and a new vision. We are grateful that Nitumigaabow Champagne joined us, and that Dr. Sonya Shin will stay in the COPE family as the Director of Research and Innovation. In 2020, I envision continuing to answer questions in close collaboration with our valuable partners and our growing staff.

In this report, you will find examples of how our partnerships inspire and guide our work every day, leading to meaningful change. We could not have achieved these heights without your support.

I am proud to be a member of the COPE family and I invite you to walk with us as we work with Native communities to improve the well-being of American Indians and Alaska Natives.



With gratitude,

Susie John, MD, MPH  
Chairperson, COPE Board of Directors

# A Community Movement for Health



# Indigenous Food Sovereignty

Our Food Sovereignty team seeks to overturn centuries of attack on Indigenous food systems, which have led to soaring rates of diet-related health conditions. We partner with healthcare facilities, training teams, retailers, and growers to make fruits, vegetables, and healthy traditional foods accessible and affordable in Native communities.

## Navajo Food Access Navigation Partnership

As part of our Food Sovereignty work, COPE partnered with the Navajo Nation Department of Health to implement activities for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded Navajo Food Access Navigation program. Through this partnership, COPE was able to organize and host a food sustainability conference, develop six community gardens, and create a GIS map of food-access resources, with the aim of increasing awareness of existing USDA programs and encouraging enrollment. The conference was targeted toward youths 18 and under, while the map will assist community members in identifying and accessing USDA Food and Nutrition resources, such as child-nutrition program sites, stores that accept food stamps, food distribution sites, and administration centers for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, and food storage and transportation infrastructure.



“And then some of the sessions that he held after the program. Me and my daughter still come back here and we learned a little more about gardening and that’s how we got our garden started. And we have corn, blue corn, melon, squash, tomatoes, chili, pumpkin, and zucchini also.”

– COPE Food Sovereignty participant after a gardening workshop

35

Stores enrolled in Healthy Native Stores Initiative

274

Families enrolled in Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program in 2019

10

Community gardens supported in 2019



“The Diné Food Sovereignty Alliance provides our partners with the Indigenous perspective of the Diné food system and various aspects of values and practices of traditional Diné foods and agriculture based on the tribal code: Diné Fundamental Laws. We are glad to have worked with COPE on incorporating Diné perspectives in their Food Sovereignty work.

– Gloria Ann Begay, Diné Food Sovereignty Alliance Executive Director



# Training and Outreach

For over 10 years, COPE has worked hand-in-hand with the Navajo Nation Community Health Representative Program to improve patient health outcomes through the provision of educational materials, trainings, and improving communication between healthcare systems. This model of integrated community care has resulted in better diabetes and cholesterol control which lowers the risk of future heart attacks in Navajo patients living with diabetes.

## Community Solutions for Community Needs

In 1968, the Community Health Representative (CHR) Program began through the Indian Citizenship Act with the mission to educate Native people about the diagnosis and symptoms of tuberculosis. As a result of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistant Act, the CHR program was adopted by the Indian Health Service (IHS) in 1970 which allowed for increased healthcare autonomy.

Tribal nations were able to employ CHRs from their home communities, closing the patient-provider gap. CHRs are likely to share the same experiences as their patients: harsh living conditions, limited access to healthy foods, and long commutes to health facilities. However, CHRs hold traditional and western practices that they can utilize to improve their patients’ health.



Navajo Community Health Representative assisting patient

Brenette Pine, a CHR supervisor with the Crownpoint Service Unit highlighted their importance, **“CHR’s are very vital when it comes to case management. They let the provider know that this patient doesn’t have any running water, electricity and actually accommodate them within the necessary medications that they need.”**

A CHR provides healthcare where others cannot. When Emergency Medical Services and the military were unable to reach a family on Navajo mountain during a thunderstorm, Kayenta Service Unit CHR Betty John delivered the needed medication to them on horseback.



Navajo CHRs gather for training

“Each CHR has a strong heart and a strong mind to address these illnesses that are affecting the Navajo people. It takes a strong person.”

– Brenette Pine, CHR Supervisor Crownpoint Service Unit



# Indigenous Youth Leadership

We believe that youth are our greatest and most underutilized resource. Our training, mentorship, and networking programs provide an opportunity for Indigenous youth to step into their roles as the next generation of healthcare leaders.

## 2019 Inter-Tribal Youth Summit

The 2019 Inter-Tribal Youth Summit, organized by COPE, La Casa Roja, and the Zuni Youth Enrichment Program (ZYEP) brought together 200 youth and adults from across North America, including Indigenous communities from Alaska, South Dakota, Hawaii, Zuni and Navajo. The youth-led summit was a two-day event for youths to connect and discuss critical issues within their community, participate in hands-on workshops to build skills, and cultivate self-expression and network to spark youth-led activities.



Group photo of students for Day 2 of Inter-Tribal Youth Summit at Canyon De Chelly, AZ

“I just wanted to say on another note that I really appreciate what COPE did in enhancing the youth through this summit. I am so grateful I was able to attend and it is hard to express how amazing this past weekend was for me spiritually. Every single speech and presentation touched me and inspired me in ways that encourages me to do more for my culture. So again, thank you for giving this opportunity to the youth to help uplift and preserve our Indigenous ways.”

– Rebekka S., an Alaskan student response to Youth Summit

“The Zuni Youth Enrichment Project (ZYEP) is very grateful for our partnership with the Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment Program (COPE). Having the opportunity to work closely with COPE staff and their youth leaders in 2019 has helped our organization learn how we could follow their approach of empowering youth to be the agents of positive social change. COPE’s example showed us that our Zuni youth leaders were optimally positioned to lead the design and implementation of youth programs intended to benefit them and their peers.”

– Joseph Claunch, PhD., Puyallup Tribal Member and Executive Director of the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project

## Next Generation of Indigenous Leaders

We recognize that opening the door to opportunities is an important step in developing the next generation of Indigenous healthcare professionals. COPE persists in connecting younger professional team members and community members with opportunities for professional development.

“In addition to networking, the sessions were a great reminder of my public health journey. My key take aways from the conference were organization capacity building, family work integration, addressing gender parity in the workplace, and personal career investment. Post-conference, my new goal is to never be complacent and always strive for innovation for the benefit of my community.” Ariel Shirley, COPE FVRx Program Specialist, on attending the Women Leaders in Global Health Conference in Rwanda

“Attending the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice made me reflect upon America’s history of racial inequality and how ignorance of difficult histories can make us susceptible to misunderstanding the present. I’m thankful for this experience as it helped clarify how the history of lynching in America can help us understand and respond to the present-day issues of racial justice.” Tierra Edison, COPE MEQ Intern, on attending the Community Partnerships for Health Equity workshop in Montgomery, AL



(Top Left) Ariel with Dr. Camara Jones, President of the American Public Health Association, (Top Right) International group of conference attendees, (Bottom) Group photo from the Community Partnerships for Health Equity workshop



# Research, Evaluation, and Innovation

The Research, Evaluation, and Innovation team creates the evidence base that supports COPE’s programming. We apply rigorous methods while protecting the programmatic nature of our work. Our evaluation and research team has an established track-record of successful research funding and draws from both Indigenous and Western methodologies. The REI program also houses Water is K’é, a community-based intervention designed to increase healthy beverage consumption and decrease sugar-sweetened beverage consumption among Navajo preschool children. The REI team is evaluating the impacts of Water is K’é.

## Key Findings, published in 2019

- COPE partners with Navajo Area IHS providers and the Navajo Nation CHR Program to provide standardized health coaching and strengthen coordination between CHRs and providers. Our research has shown that this collaboration leads **to better diabetes and cholesterol control which lowers the risk of future heart attacks** in Navajo patients living with diabetes.
- COPE’s Healthy Native Stores Initiative (HNSI) partners with local stores to offer promotional materials, staff training, store layout improvements, and Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program (FVRx) redemption. Our research has shown that local shoppers are **1.5 times more likely** to buy fruits and vegetable at HNSI stores, compared to those at non-participating stores.

16

Conferences/  
Presentations

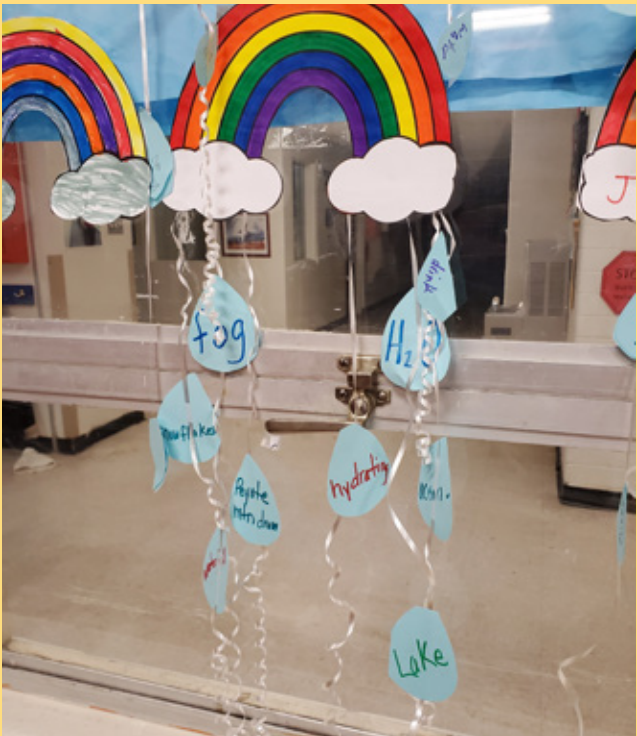
3

Manuscripts/Reports  
Published



Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment is an important partner for the Division of Global Health Equity. Over the past 11 years, COPE and BWH have collaborated to build programs to address health needs on Navajo Nation, while striving to better understand the impact we are collectively making. Working in Navajo Nation and other Native communities is a response to our moral conviction that health is a human right, whether in the United States or abroad.”

– Dr. Paul Farmer, Chief of the Division of Global Health Equity at Brigham and Women’s Hospital



#HealthyKidsHealthyFutures #DontLetSugarShapeYou #ZeroTo60

“The water challenge was hard at first but it got easier when I mixed it with different fruits and cucumbers. Water is good for your body and mind. Keep on drinking, with or without fruits!”

Job Van Lee  
Beclabito Day School Prince (2018–2019)

info@copeprogram.org

COPE  
Community Outreach & Patient Empowerment

www.copeprogram.org

Made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(Left) Tó Party at Bluff Elementary School in Bluff, UT (Right) A Water Champion poster for the Water Is K’é Initiative

“We noticed our students are visiting us at the front office more than before only because we have our water station set up there. They started bringing their own water bottles. We hear comments from them that the water tastes good and has good flavor. More water is being consumed during P.E. classes for all Jr. High students, so we have to keep the jar refilled. Students notice what kind of fruits are being infused with the water and like to taste all different varieties we have done for them. Not only do the students like the infused water, but at the end of the school day, we have about 3-4 students coming over for the fruits that was used that day to eat. Even parents have commented that this is a good idea and always want to taste the infused water.”

– Red Mesa community member



# Cancer Research and Innovation

Guided by the community, COPE has developed a set of recommendations for how to improve cancer care on the Navajo Nation, created and adapted education material, and continues to provide communication and education opportunities aimed at promoting a positive approach to a challenging and complex health condition. The Cancer Care Research and Innovation team uses mixed methods to understand the barriers and opportunities to improve cancer care on Navajo Nation, and leverages technology to improve access to education and coordination of care.

## 5<sup>TH</sup> Annual Cancer Survivorship Conference

The Cancer Survivorship Conference seeks to bring together a broad range of participants (community members, clinical providers, outreach workers, and programmatic individuals) to share and learn about the cancer outcomes on the Navajo Nation.

At our most recent conference in December 2019, we were honored to have three Navajo Nation Council Delegates present at the conference: Honorable Nathaniel Brown, Honorable Amber Crotty, and Honorable Daniel Tso. Director of the Department of Health, Dr. Jill Jim, also shared remarks and updates on behalf of the Office of the President and Vice President.

A panel of survivors, patients, and caregivers shared their experiences of their cancer journey. Topics of discussion included an overview of cancer, treatment types, staying healthy, nutrition, traditional medicine, initiatives on Navajo Nation working to improve cancer outcomes, epidemiology and environmental considerations on Navajo Nation, and talking circles.



The University of Arizona also hosted a Town Hall meeting to understand the needs and assets of communities across Arizona to inform legislation for cancer prevention and control public policies.

“Thank you for reaching out and being a strong support for people affected by cancer.”

– Cancer Survivorship Conference attendee



(Left) Dr. Jill Jim, Navajo Nation Department of Health Executive Director  
(Right) Daniel Tso, Navajo Nation Council Delegate

# Outreach, Training, Technology, and Engagement

COPE has worked to train all Navajo Nation CHRs on their adapted cancer education materials, the Circle of Life curriculum, in close collaboration with the American Cancer Society. A total of 66 CHRs have received the 24 hours training. COPE is helping these CHRs receive specialty certification through the New Mexico Department of Health. A total of 18 CHRs have been piloting this curriculum in COPE’s mobile technology platform with community members. COPE continues to be guided by our Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) through monthly meetings and also held a public radio forum on KTNN where PFAC provided information and resources to the Navajo community.



Patient and Family Advisory Council members with Council Delegate Amber Crotty (top row center)

“I joined PFAC to be a voice for my Native people, to provide support and community resources; I want to help identify strengths in the community and use them as tools for developing solutions.”

– Patient and Family Advisory Council Member



Statement of Financial Position June 30, 2019

ASSETS	2019	2018
Cash and cash equivalents	\$258,970	\$326,796
Grants receivable	408,660	314,664
Accounts receivable	10,846	
Prepaid expenses	1,571	117,271
Property and equipment	508,928	419,679
Total Assets	\$1,188,975	\$1,178,410
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	110,901	61,019
Deferred revenue	51,250	
Accrued payroll expenses	34,009	31,536
Fiscal agency payable	5,000	5,000
Total Liabilities	201,160	97,555
Net Assets		
Without donor restrictions		
Undesignated	339,871	381,373
Net investments in property and equipment	508,928	419,679
With donor restrictions	139,016	279,803
Total Net Assets	987,815	1,080,855
Total Liabilities and Total Net Assets	\$1,188,975	\$1,178,410

Statement of Activities June 30, 2019

REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	2019 Total	2018 Total
Grants	\$302,775	\$1,062,883	\$1,365,658	\$1,181,322
Program Services	88,609		88,609	52,237
Contributors	38,764		38,764	59,396
All other	3,812		3,812	29
In-kind contributors	761,411		761,411	828,822
Net assets released from restriction	1,203,670	(1,203,670)		
Total Assets	\$2,399,041	(\$140,787)	\$2,258,254	\$2,121,806
EXPENSES				
Program services	1,621,455		1,621,455	1,966,056
Support services				
Management and general	711,888		711,888	411,161
Fund-raising	17,951		17,951	26,057
Total Expenses	2,351,294		2,351,294	2,403,274
Change in net assets	47,747	(140,787)	(93,040)	(281,468)
Net assets, beginning of year	801,052	279,803	1,080,855	1,362,323
Net assets, end of year	\$848,799	\$139,016	\$987,815	\$1,080,855

All figures shown are as realized on COPE 501(c)3 financial statements. Statements are available upon request



Thank you to our supporters!  
The work described in this annual  
report would not be possible  
without the generous contributions  
of the following partners:

Brigham and Women’s Hospital: Division of Global Health Equity

Boston Medical Center

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

First Things First

Notah Begay III Foundation

Partners In Health

Rx Foundation

San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

United States Department of Agriculture

Zegar Family Foundation

## Partnerships

24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council

American Cancer Society

Bread Loaf School of English

COPE Board of Directors

COPE Community Health Advisory Panel

COPE Patient and Family Advisory Council

Diné College

Diné Food Sovereignty Alliance

Food Trust FoodCorps

Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic

Hasbídító Program

Indian Health Services

La Casa Roja

Local Navajo retailers

MEDICC

Middlebury College

National Drinking Water Alliance

Navajo Area Indian Health Services

Navajo Nation Community Health Representative & Outreach Program

Navajo Department of Diné Education

Navajo Epidemiology Center

Navajo FACE Program

Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

Navajo Ramah School Board

Navajo Technical University

New Mexico Cancer Center

New Mexico Department of Health

New Mexico Farm to Table

New Mexico First Born

Northern Arizona Partnership for Native American Cancer Prevention

Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute

UCSF HEAL Program

University of Arizona Cancer Center

University of New Mexico Cancer Center

UNM BA/MD Program

Wholesome Wave

Zuni Youth Enrichment Project

“Partners In Health is proud to be in close partnership with COPE, we work and learn together to advance health equity in all corners of the globe.”

– Sheila Davis, CEO Partners In Health



# What's next?

COPE's expansive vision includes geographic as well as programmatic growth. In the coming years, we will build on COPE's existing strengths and deliberately expand to offer the greatest potential benefit to the Navajo Nation, and ultimately, other Indigenous communities as well. By engaging with and listening to tribal leaders, patients, and healthcare providers, we have identified behavioral health as an area where COPE can help the community meet its needs. We aim to implement early-intervention programming in schools to help ensure that Indigenous children receive the culturally-appropriate mental health tools and resources they need, and to expand mental health services for Veterans. We are also collecting evidence on the impact of our proven Food Sovereignty model and becoming capable of offering the model for replication with other communities. We will continue to increase efficiency in healthcare by equipping our partners with appropriate technology, such as computer tablets. Recognizing that youth are our most valuable resource, we will continue supporting their ambitions and equipping them to become the next generation of Indigenous leaders.

Moving forward, our partnerships will continue to be the strong foundation on which all of our work is built and stands. We look forward to a fruitful year ahead.



**It is an honor to join a team that truly believes that our Indigenous communities have the answers to the health disparities and inequities we face as native peoples; through innovation and grassroot community efforts, COPE has been able to work alongside and partner with tribal nations in making lasting positive change.”**

**Nitumigaabow Champagne, COPE Executive Director**

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