

Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Rates among American Indians and Alaska Natives in California

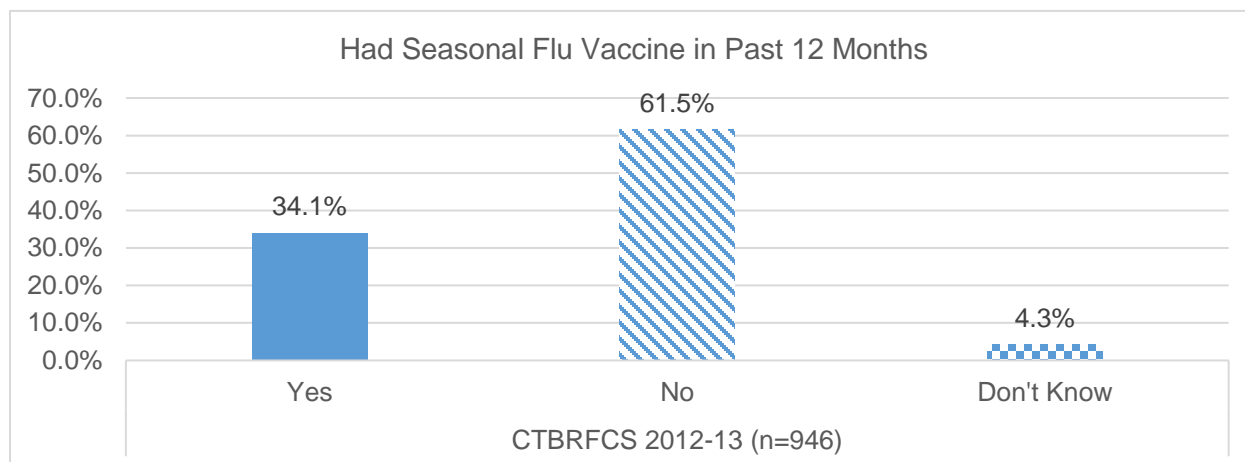
Background

Influenza (the flu) is a respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that can easily spread to other people. Influenza can cause mild to severe illness and at times can lead to death. Getting vaccinated each year can minimize the risk of getting the flu. American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) individuals have a higher risk of contracting influenza compared to the general U.S. population¹. During the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, AIANs died at a rate four times greater than other races and ethnic groups². The Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) found that after adjusting for age, the death rate in the Urban Indian Health Organization service areas was 2.5 deaths per 1,000,000 for the total population where AIAN had a death rate of 3.2 per 1,000,000¹. Compared to the general population, AIAN have a lower vaccination rate which leads them to have a higher death rate².

To assess for California's progress in reducing the burden of seasonal influenza among AIAN, we compared benchmarks from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Healthy People 2020 to adult AIAN data from the paper-based 2012-13 California Tribal Behavioral Risk Factor Community Survey (CTBRFCS) and telephone-based 2011-12 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS).

Seasonal Flu Vaccine Status

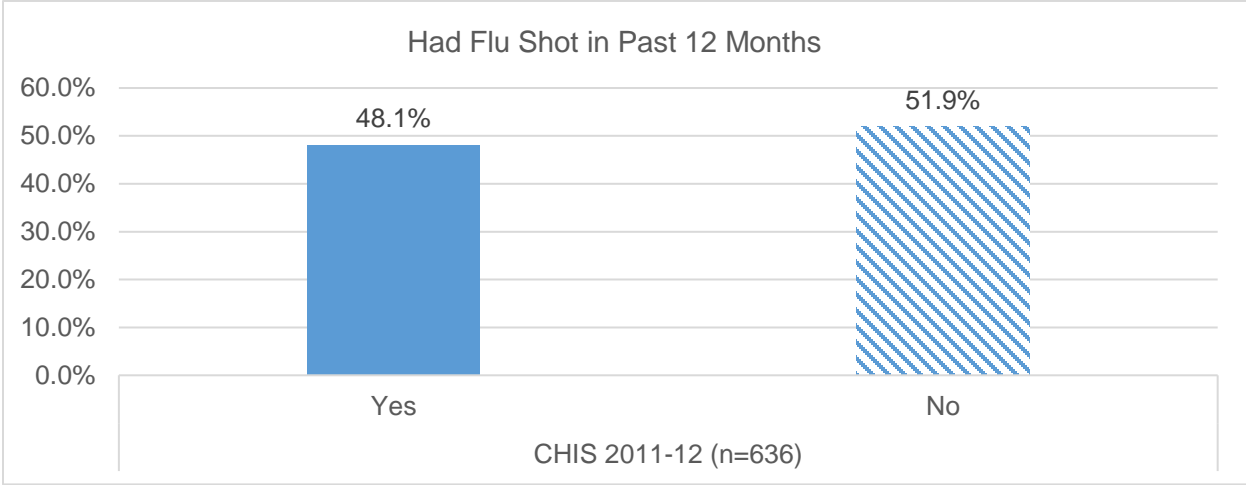
A total of 34.1% of AIAN respondents from the 2012-13 CTBRFCS reported receiving a seasonal flu vaccine. A total of 61.5% reported never receiving a seasonal flu vaccine, and 4.3% were not sure whether they ever received a seasonal flu vaccine.



¹ Influenza Risk. Urban Indian Health Institute. Retrieved from http://www.uihi.org/download/Influenza-Communication-Broadcast_2014-10-03b_kd.pdf.

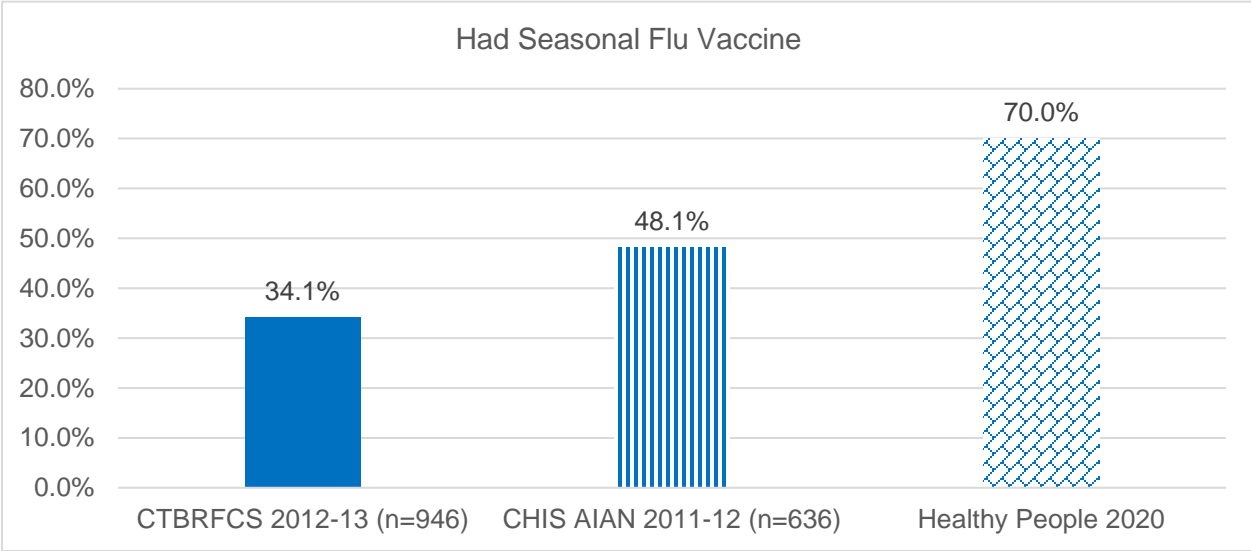
² Native Population at Higher Risk of Illness or Death From Flu Sweeping the Nation. Indian Country Today. Retrieved from <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/culture/health-wellness/native-population-at-higher-risk-of-illness-or-death-from-flu-sweeping-the-nation/>

Roughly 48% of AIAN respondents from 2011-12 CHIS reported having had a flu shot in the past 12 months. A total of 51.9% did not have a flu shot in the past 12 months.



Healthy People 2020 Target Goal

Adult AIAN from California report receiving flu vaccinations at levels lower than the Healthy People 2020 recommendations. Specifically, only 34.1% of CTBRFCS respondents and 48.1% of CHIS respondents reported having a flu shot compared to the Healthy People 2020 goal of 70% of adults who should be vaccinated annually³.



³ Immunization and Infectious Diseases. Healthy People 2020. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved from <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/immunization-and-infectious-diseases/objectives>

Recommendations to Increase Influenza Vaccination Rates at Indian Health Programs

- Develop flyers and posters encouraging vaccination and display at community organizations and events.
- Conduct community outreach or education events to discuss the benefits of getting vaccinated.
- Conduct home visits to increase vaccination rates for those unable to travel to a clinic.
- Develop mobile vaccine to further expand reach to the AIAN population.

Acknowledgements

This report was developed by Omara Farooq, MPH; Tiffany Ta, MPH; and Maureen Wimsatt, PhD, MSW, from the California Tribal Epidemiology Center (CTEC) housed within the California Rural Indian Health Board, Inc. (CRIHB) in Sacramento, CA. This fact sheet was funded by Indian Health Service Cooperative Agreement #U1B1IHS300189/03 as part of the core activities of CTEC.



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