Navajo Birth Cohort Study Results Year One

Forest Lake, AZ - The Navajo Birth Cohort Study recently held community meetings in Chinle, Arizona, Tuba City, and Shiprock, NM to report initial findings for the study that is well into its second year of recruiting moms-to-be, dads, and babies. The study has a goal to recruit 1,500 participants.

Principal Investigator, Dr. Johnnye Lewis, University of New Mexico, Ph.D. Candidate Jennifer Öng, and Chris Shuey of Southwest Research and Information Center reported on first year study results on June 17 - 18, 2014 in Tuba City, Arizona.

The UNM research team complimented Tuba City staff who reported over 80 participants in time to report first year results. The Tuba City region includes communities from Bodaway-Gap, Copper Mine, Totalea, Lechee, Kaibeto, Navajo Mountain, Cow Springs, and Coal Mine Mesa.

The relationship between environmental exposures and the development of newborn children will be determined by the study. Baby's family will learn more about how their immediate environment affects their health. The year one results show concern over how people build their fires, how they burn coal, wood, and if they drink water from local sources. The participants in the study will be able to make informed decisions about how to prevent environmental contaminants from polluting their home environment and impacting their health.

A new video titled the Navajo Birth Cohort Study Part XV: Women's Health Minute is now available on You Tube. The nine minute video introduces preliminary results from home environmental survey assessments (HEAs), blood, and urine

See Uranium Study, Page 3

Lena Fowler, District 5, Coconino County Supervisor holds up a copy of the Iiná Nizhoni newsletter during the Pioneer Day event in Navajo Mountain, Utah. Photo by Malcolm Benally

liná Nizhóní naaltsoos baahane' ła' bína’ididíílkit! Navajo Birth Cohort Study bits’áádóó t’óó ahayóí hane’. Díí na’alkaah álnééh éí niha’álchini amá doo azhe’e dooleelií ba álnééh. Amá yiitsáoo áádóó ashchiígo daats’i léetsó bizii ba’áte’ hóló ha’níngí daats’i bits’áádóó awéé bits’íís baah dahwiidoo’aalgo aít’é?. Ha’níigo na’idikidíí éí díí ats’íís baa áháyá baahane’. liná Nizhóní newsletter 2014 t’áá díí ji la’ yidiíttah.

Pick up a copy of our liná Nizhóní newsletter today! The Navajo Birth Cohort Study has many stories to tell. The study is being done for young moms- and dads-to-be, and baby. This study asks: does long-term exposure to uranium affect the development of children on Navajo lands? liná Nizhóní is about wellness and healthy living in Dinétah. Pick up a 2014 issue of liná Nizhóní today.
Letter from the Director

The Navajo Birth Cohort Study is an exciting opportunity to answer questions that we have heard from community members across Navajo Nation for decades who want to know if the waste remaining from the uranium mining period is affecting health in communities. Of particular concern has been the effect on children and future generations.

In 2007 representative Henry Waxman began a series of hearings to understand why the more than 500 mines and their more than 1000 waste sites remain on Navajo more than 20 years after the last mines closed. These hearings led to a 5-year plan to bring together federal agencies led by USEPA to first understand and then begin to clean up these sites.

In 2010, the congressional committee overseeing the process requested that health studies be added to the effort, and the Navajo Birth Cohort Study (NBCS) was born in response to community concerns. The NBCS is an opportunity to bring together community members, researchers, tribal and federal programs, and clinical health providers to learn from each other and try to determine if there is any relationship between exposures to uranium waste, birth outcomes, and child development in Navajo communities.

The exciting thing about the NBCS is that we all learn important information that will improve health throughout the study – even though the answer to the main question will take several years. The involvement of Navajo Division of Health in collecting information helps to build research skills for future studies. Home environmental assessments provide participating families with information on risks for their children’s health, as well as information on any metals identified in their urine or blood that might indicate other exposures of concern as well – or commonly confirm that there is nothing to be concerned about! Assessments of child development will also provide early warning of any possible problems, and make sure children are connected to services that will maximize their developmental potential at earlier times when they are most beneficial.

The recent detection of metals, including uranium, in babies brings home to all of us the importance of these studies to protect the health of future generations.

The NBCS and its broad partnership will provide Navajo Division of Health and other tribal agencies with information on where there are needs to improve the health of Navajo children, whether those are in better clinical care, removal of environmental hazards, better nutritional options, or increased developmental services.

Participants will receive a beautiful two-volume set of Native Journeywoman books which provide guidance from a Native woman’s perspective to address health questions.

So learn about the NBCS and its partners in this series of inserts, listen to our radio Women’s Health Minute, watch our YouTube videos on the Navajo Birth Cohort Study, visit us on FaceBook, visit HealthyVoices.org, or call for information to 1-877-545-6775. Spread the word to your family and friends, and join us if you are a 14-45 years old, pregnant, have lived on Navajo Nation for 5 years at any point in your life, and plan to deliver your baby at Chinle, Tuba City, Shiprock, Tsosiehotso, or Gallup Indian Medical Center!

Johnnye Lewis, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator, NBCS
Director, CEHP
UNM College of Pharmacy

Yá’át’ée! Greetings from Navajo Division of Health.

It is always a great way to start the fall season with words of encouragement and appreciation for the crops that we are tending to, as our work flourishes with success and accomplishments. The CHR/Outreach Program walks on an exciting, new path with the many partnerships that we have cultivated. The Navajo Birth Cohort Study has initiated the regional Window Rock/Fort Defiance Early Childhood Networking Group. The group shares information and collaborates with partners who can strategically increase resources to our target community of mothers-to-be and their babies.

The NBCS is bringing innovative ways to conduct studies where the CHR/Outreach Program has created a team of Senior CHR’s building upon their knowledge base and skills while conducting a rigorous study. Our program is prepared to assist in future long-term studies that will enable us as a Nation to help create healthy homes and communities. Nationally, there is a new Public Health agenda for America: community-based research and planning for 2020 Healthy People!

I would like to encourage our young Dine people to continue your education. The future of our great Navajo Nation rests with your commitment to help our people overcome the health disparities that impact our Navajo people. We will continue to educate and recruit young moms so we can find solutions for the communities that requested this study. The questions remain: does uranium exposure impact birth outcomes and development? The data is beginning to come in. We will report to you through the media, to your communities, and at chapter meetings.

Thank you to over 300 participants we have in the study. Your participation makes this study a success because you are helping your people strive for a healthy environment. Ahehee’. Thank you.

Mae Gilene Begay
Program Director CHR/Outreach Program

Kayenta Alternative Health Care Center Ground Breaking ceremony for staff housing quarters, June 14, 2014 in Kayenta, AZ. Kayenta is now recruiting NBCS participants. Photo by Malcolm Benally

“T’ dá shi shikéyahdi álah ná’ddlehchí, díí na’alakaah ánneéh nidaañishíghí ta’ nihiit hodoolinhii níiìngzígo éí nihich’í’ hodiílnih

1- (877)-545-6775.”

If you would like a presentation about the study, please call us to set up an appointment today!

Navajo Birth Cohort Study
www.healthyvoices.org
Forest Lake, AZ - During a short focus group, the CHERS team came up with ten reasons why you should join as a participant for the Navajo Birth Cohort Study if you are a mom-to-be or a father.

1. As parents for your newborn child, you will have an opportunity to learn about good nutrition for your child. CHERS staff members can share resources with you on places you can get access to good nutrition resources on and off the Navajo reservation.

2. Mom, baby, and dad - can learn more about safety in their home environment. Our Home Environmental Assessments (HEAs), gives an opportunity to learn more about the land features around your home. Learn more about your water sources - is the quality of your drinking water safe and healthy? Evaluation of the participant family’s drinking water at home is a part of our exposure assessments in the home environmental assessment surveys being conducted as a part of the study.

3. During the prenatal care stages, the blood and urine that are drawn for routine care will be used to determine whether some nutritional needs are being met to improve overall wellness.

4. During the prenatal stages of a participant’s pregnancy, the information gained from blood and urine samples will be used to determine if exposures during pregnancy affect the health of babies on the Navajo Nation. According to the study’s brochure on environmental health, “Contaminants that the mother is exposed to while pregnant can be transferred to the child.”

5. Developmental surveys conducted as part of the study can be used to detect early onset of development issues for baby. If there are indications of developmental delays identified, the study can make referrals to early intervention programs, such as Navajo Nation’s Growing in Beauty program.

6. Mom, dad, and baby will have a more accurate family health history that can be used for family planning. The Navajo Birth Cohort Study research says that the most vulnerable time for a child maybe during pregnancy. During the baby’s development it is important to try to minimize a child’s exposure to contaminants.

7. The health information that is gathered from participants not only benefits the family planning process, it also helps to improve information on overall United States Healthy People 2010 efforts. The Navajo Birth Cohort Study is seeing a concentration of uranium and copper at higher levels than those found in the overall United States. Educating the community on ways to reduce the presence of these environmental contaminants is a part of the study’s public outreach efforts. For more information, visit the website healthyvoices.org.

8. Your privacy and time is respected at all stages of the study. As a participant, all your personal health information is kept strictly confidential. The study is required to adhere to stringent HIPAA laws. Visit the website hospitals.unm.edu/pguide/hipaa.shtml.

9. The study will be conducted with minimal travel for the participant; it will involve your local hospital with a birth unit that is near your home and community. The CCL and CHERs staff will work to accommodate your schedule. The staff respects your time.

10. Every step in the study helps the participant’s family to become more informed about public health and the local environment. You can advocate - and help others. You are helping the Navajo Nation’s efforts to create a comprehensive land use plan in each community. The study will look closely at the home environment. The study will look for any environmental contaminants that may be harmful for mom, baby, and dad.

**Kayenta Community ready for cohort study.**

Kayenta, AZ - The Kayenta Alternative Health Care Center is nearing completion with a grand opening tentative date set for Summer 2015. The 180,000 square feet facility will feature a birthing unit, prenatal care, and a wellness center that will allow the Kayenta hospital to become the sixth health care facility on the Navajo Nation to bring major support for the Navajo Birth Cohort Study.

As planning proceeds towards dedication of the new Kayenta hospital, the Navajo study has begun to mobilize its staff to recruit participants within the Kayenta Service Unit, and serving the area where mining began on the Navajo Nation.

Lori Barton, a 20-plus years Indian Health Service employee, was confirmed in June 2014 as the new Cohort Clinical Liaison (CCL). Lori will now be based at the current Kayenta health center to do outreach and recruit participants for the study.

A cohort clinical liaison is charged with recruiting participants, then serves as the point of contact for all participants in the Navajo Birth Cohort Study. The Kayenta service unit within the Navajo reservation covers a large portion of northeastern Arizona including Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Monument Valley, Black Mesa, Inscription House, Navajo Mountain and Oljato in southeastern Utah.

Atah hozhodzééh in Navajo means exercising. Walk, ride a bike, ride your horse around, do some gardening, go hiking, go running, and traditional ranching at home keeps the blood pressure down and burns up calories.

T’áá hó ajít’éégo. It is all up to you. Just do it!

Atah áhozdilzééh dóó nizhónígo nitshíník’e. As Native women, we should be taking care of ourselves by having good thoughts, traveling, going places, eating one another, showing good energy, and expressing love. Let’s get to know nature by taking walks, meditating on the land and working in the garden.


The goal is to find the balance between eating and exercise.
Abigail Sanders, Tuba City- Cohort Clinical Liaison

Favorite Color: Purple, teal, and grey.
Favorite Movie: Joy Luck Club and recently, The Other Women.
A Book you would recommend: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot

Where would you go on vacation? I would go anywhere as long as I get to spend time with my children.

Hello, my name is Abigail Sanders. My clan is Nóóda’í Ashiihí (Ute – Salt clan), born for Ta’nees’zhah’nii (The Tangle People). My maternal grandfather is Tlizí Lani (Many Goats clan) and my paternal grandfather is Bird Clan from Cherokee Nation Western Band.

I currently reside in Tuba City, Arizona. I am originally from the Tall Mountain area north of Shonto, AZ. I am very family oriented.

I heard about the Navajo Birth Cohort Study through a job listing with Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation, then through training in the lab I learned more about how to process the specimens for the study. I feel that every step and stage in the process of the cohort study are all very important: from enrolling, to specimen collection and processing, to medical data abstraction. I do not see any step outweighing another.

As a cohort clinical liaison, what I would recommend to a mother, or a participant is to educate themselves in all aspects of motherhood: good nutrition, physically, mentally, and environmentally.

What I enjoy the most about working as NBCS Clinical Liaison is that I have the ability to educate my community about a great study being conducted on environmental contaminants.

Being able to help my community to become aware and take the first step in preventions against environmental contaminants is a really good thing. Knowing that I am making a difference for my children and future generations to have a better tomorrow, today - through baby steps.

Josephine Watson, Cow Springs, AZ - CHERS Staff

Hello my name is Josephine Watson. I am White Corn Zuni Edgewater born for Natoh Dine’è Táchíí’nii. Kinyaa’áanii are my Cheiis and Descheenie are my Nális. I am a Community Health Environmental Research Specialist for the Western area of the Navajo Nation.

My experience has brought me full circle in my employment. I have medical experience, I gain public health work through the study’s field work. Also, I have always felt the passion for environmental work. I have always felt a need to stand up for the environment. I am from the Shonto area and a graduate of Monument Valley. I am a Mustang!

I enjoy my work and look forward to witnessing a family’s new addition.

Working for the Birth Cohort Study, I have an opportunity to see the dynamics in family life and I get to meet a new baby. That is what I enjoy is the new babies and watching families with their new addition. The study can help families by becoming aware of environmental aspects of the home.

Becoming more environmentally conscious and aware of contaminants in the home is important. Most people do not know that uranium is a heavy metal, just becoming aware of this study educates people. Just finding out what kinds of contaminants are present in the home can help identify how to reduce exposure.

The Birth Cohort Study gives me the opportunity to do outreach in the community. I take much pleasure in speaking to the public about the study and passing out information. Especially being able to inform the community about the study - that this is the first time this has been done. All this data will belong to the Navajo people.

This is the just the beginning! Our own people taking their own data and using it to benefit everyone! The cohort of participants has brought me closer to my community. I am more aware of the contaminants in our area. I see this study like wearing your seat belt, like you don’t know when you might be in an accident. Just wearing your seat belt can reduce your injuries. We aren’t going to know if an accident will happen, but we are prepared. Being aware of the contaminants can help families to start to reduce those contaminants.

This is what it means to become environmentally conscious and becoming aware of the surroundings.

As a mother, I would like to make a stable and safe environment for my child. This is what the Navajo Birth Cohort Study brings. When a home environmental assessment survey is done the report gets sent back to the participant, so the families will know what is found in their home. When the baby turns 2, 6, 9, 12 months, NBCS study asks questions about the baby’s development and if a concern is noticed, the baby can be referred to the Growing in Beauty program. Early intervention makes a whole lot of difference. This is what the Navajo Birth Cohort Study does.

I am grateful to be part of this study. It is important to our people. Participants can become active in their community and do something for the environment. When I hear about the environmental issues I want to help. The study makes me feel like I am doing something for the people. I am very thankful to all the people I meet and get to see. I enjoy getting out there and meeting many of you out there. Don’t hesitate to say “Hi” to me. Thank you my people! I look forward to being out in your community.
Charlotte Swindal, CCL, Chinle Hospital.

Favorite Color: Green. Charlotte has garden at her home in Chinle and enjoys growing fruit trees, vegetables and flowers.

Favorite Movie: As a busy person, Charlotte enjoys watching History channel, shows on National Geographic, Animal Planet, and the Weather Channel.

Charlotte Swindal, CCL, works at the Chinle Hospital. Charlotte first came to work among the Navajo people in the spring of 1995 for the Fort Defiance Indian Health Center. From that point on until 1999, Charlotte worked on several locum assignments at Tuba City, Farm Defiance, and Chinle hospitals.

In January 2003, she went to work permanently for the Gallup Indian Medical Center where she worked until August 2006 when she transferred to the Chinle Comprehensive Health Care center. In Chinle, Charlotte works as a nurse, mid-wife, and now as a Cohort Clinical Liaison for the Navajo Birth Cohort Study.

Charlotte sees the connections that can be made while living with the land. She says that a lot of knowledge can be gained from this. While she enjoys growing edible foods in her garden, Charlotte also enjoys growing flowers and harvesting water for use around her home.

“You should learn to do things right, because there is a process to everything,” she says. “You can never go wrong if you do things right the first time,” she says in an interview over the phone. At her home in Chinle, she is remodeling to increase the use of solar power. Living in a dry, desert environment, Charlotte finds enjoyment in sustainable agriculture, recycling, use of grey water (water that has already been used) for gardening.

As a CCL for the study, she says that it is very important for the Navajo Nation to continue to gather data that will show the relationship between exposures of heavy metals to the levels found in moms, dads, and babies who are participating in the study.

Johnna Rogers, Community Cohort Liaison

Northern Navajo Medical Center in Shiprock, NM

Favorite Color: Blue
Favorite Movie: Dirty Dancing
Favorite Book to Recommend: The Bible

Johnna was born and raised in Carlsbad NM. She is a member of the Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma. She has been a Registered Nurse since 1988. Her nursing career is filled with working on women’s health in Labor and Delivery. She began working for Indian Health Services in 1992 in the state of Oklahoma until she transferred to Anchorage, AK where she worked for 15 years. She came to Shiprock, NM in April of 2010 to continue her work in Labor and Delivery of newborn babies. Johnna began her work as a Cohort Clinical Liaison for the Navajo Birth Cohort Study in May 2012.

If Johnna was given an opportunity to travel, she said she would travel Europe by train.

Johnna says that the most important aspect of her work is to inform expecting mothers about the Navajo Birth Cohort Study. She recommends that all moms-to-be should get early and regular prenatal care. Moms-to-be should also take good care of their health and make sure they get regular well baby checks. Johnna believes that the most rewarding aspect of her job is engaging and interacting with potential participants and playing a big role in data collection.

Roxanne Thompson, CHERS, Gallup, NM

My name is Roxanne Thompson, I live in Gallup, NM, originally from Torreon, NM. I am of the Tangle clan. My fathers are Red House clan. My maternal grandfathers are Bitter Water. My paternal grandfathers are Zia clan/Hairy People clan.

I am one of the Community Health Environmental Research Specialists working with the Navajo Birth Cohort Study within the Gallup Service Unit. The most joy I get out of working with the Navajo Birth Cohort Study is meeting with the participants and their families. A majority of the time, the family have other children and other extended family in the home. It’s hard to get to know them well. I am always excited for the parents-to-be with their baby about to be born.

It is the nicest feeling when the family sees you in public and they greet you. It is a relationship that continues to grow and you watch the baby grow. So, it is not always about a study, it’s about being involved with your local community members and letting them know that you care about them and the communities in the local areas.

I feel the NBCS is important to gather the necessary data. “I hope that future studies will help demonstrate cause and effect that will lead to clean up” of the abandoned uranium mines, she says. As a nurse for many years, she also hopes it will improve screening patients when they come to the hospital, and that good treatments will be available to them.

When asked what kind of advice she gives to a pregnant mom-to-be, Charlotte says, among a run down of minor tips she sets on saying with a focused tone, “… mainly, learn about what it takes to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby after birth. Live a healthy lifestyle, avoid harmful substances, and find joy in the journey to becoming a parent to your child.”
Delila Begay, CCL, Fort Defiance Hospital

**Favorite Color:** Purple and pink.

**Favorite Movie:** *How To Lose A Guy in Ten Days*

**A book you would recommend:** I haven’t been reading lately.

**Where would you go on a two week vacation?** I would go to the Bahamas with my family.

“Iñá Nizhóní. A beautiful life.”

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Delila Begay, Community Cohort Liaison for Tséhootsooí Fort Defiance hospital photographed here in Window Rock, Arizona in August 2014. Photo by Malcolm Benally
I remember Joe Clitso," she continues, "he said all could see the completion of the hospital. John Nicks, from the very beginning have passed on before they dedicated community members who were here with us to see that our vision comes true. Three of our most "But, we are still here together having done the work lobbying, and educating the community about building looks back over the past three decades of planning, Linda White. Madame Chairperson Helen Bonnaha luncheon for Kayenta Indian Health Services CEO construction site meeting room enjoying a retirement committee members sit inside the Flintco, Inc. To fulfill this long time dream, seven steering committee member had requested a two-story windows. The use of Navajo oral traditions helps to validate the hard sciences, and has been a hot topic for years in academia but it is usually debated more in the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology. When there are opportunities to talk about Native American histories, the Navajo legacy of uranium and the oral traditions from Navajo communities can now help scientists and doctors discuss the health disparities and strengthen health histories in Navajo communities. This study is making a digital history that will help explore how the first uranium company who arrived on Navajo lands over 80 years ago. The abandoned uranium mines and milling sites still affects the health of Navajo communities today.

McPherson uses the Navajo concept of k’é, the Navajo natural kinship system, to introduce the subject of the book: the ancestral Anasazi, Mokwic, and Hisatsinom people of the south west. He balances the oral traditions of southwest Indians with scientific and archaeological evidence. In his book, McPherson continually references the need for oral traditions to strengthen the narrative of academically accepted facts usually debated in anthropology, anthropology and the hard sciences. McPherson says, oral traditions also help to strengthen and address the issues of repatriation among Native peoples.

"The Navajos see relations with a combined, unified form called k’é," he writes in his introduction. "The closer one approaches biological kin, with the mother-child bond being the strongest, the more intense the feeling and commitment." The Navajo Birth Cohort Study relies on and emphasizes the child-mother bond in its study.

The Navajo Birth Cohort Study uses the oral traditions of the Navajo people to provide educational tools through the use of the written word. The study documents the oral traditions told through the "mytho-historical" figures of Changing Woman, White Shell Woman, the Hero Twins: Slayer of Enemy Gods and Born For Water to talk about present day birth and development of Navajo children. These mytho-historical figures reference and represent the fundamental values of growing development of children, motherhood, fatherhood, and k’é. For Navajo people, the act of telling these stories conveys iiná hózhó, that life is beautiful.

The cohort study emphasizes the need for oral traditions to be collected to interpret, communicate, and talk about enviromental health on Navajo land.

The facts of life comes from the land.

New Kayenta Hospital set to welcome Navajo Birth Cohort Study

KAYENTA, AZ – The north view from the second floor offices of the Kayenta Alternative Health Care Center looking north will soon offer a scenic view of the Kayenta community: a silent view of moving tourist traffic, shopping centers, gas stations, hotels, restaurants, and housing projects from large picture windows.

To fulfill this long time dream, seven steering committee members sit inside the Flintco, Inc. construction site meeting room enjoying a retirement luncheon for Kayenta Indian Health Services CEO Linda White. Madame Chairperson Helen Bonnaha looks back over the past three decades of planning, lobbying, and educating the community about building this new hospital set to open in summer 2015 for her beloved community.

"But, we are still here together having done the work to see that our vision comes true. Three of our most dedicated community members who were here with us from the very beginning have passed on before they could see the completion of the hospital. John Nicks, Joe B. Clitso, and Judge Bradley: they were like our visionaries," explains Madame Chair.

"I remember Joe Clitso," she continues, "he said all these things back then, while he was looking ahead. ‘I want a hospital to get well in, not to die in.’ The Elder steering committee member had requested a two-story building during the planning meetings. The dream is coming true.

The Elder steering committee member, Joe Clitso once told the committee, “One day when I start going to the new hospital, I want to ride the elevator to the second floor and be able to look for my sheep.” The hospital is now in its final stages of construction.

Navajo Tribal Utility Authority has turned on the water to the facility. The painting of walls, installation of cabinets, ceiling grids, floor tiling, room signage, and lighting all point to the completion of a huge project - one that will change the face of the whole town that is home to over a million visitors per year.

Early May 2015 is the tentative move in date from the old “Band Aid clinic” as the committee likes to call the old community health center.

“We’ve made a lot of changes based on the pros and cons from other hospital facilities that were built on Navajo lands in the past. So that we are able to keep staff housing rent low, we will have a lot of apartment style living quarters, triplexes, and duplex homes,” outgoing CEO Linda White explains.

In the future, due to local hotels being booked during the tourist season all summer long, the hospital is building it’s own residence inn for doctors, scientists, and specialists who may come to town to do business at the new hospital. The residence inn will have 19 rooms available for daily and weekly rental – the first of its kind in any health care facility on the Navajo reservation.

Forest Lake, AZ - A closer look at the Navajo Birth Cohort Study provides a good opportunity to review Bruce McPherson’s book Viewing the Ancestors: Perceptions of the Anasazi, Mokwic, and Hisatsinom to inform readers about the continued use of the oral traditions. The Navajo Birth Cohort Study an exciting project that was ordered by the U.S. Congress in August addressing an important long standing issue in Navajo life today: the effects of long-term exposure to abandoned uranium mines on the birth and development of Navajo children.

Sixteen heavy metals have been identified as the sources of possible environmental contamination. Uranium, arsenic, and toxic heavy metals found in the home are of the most concern all across the Navajo Nation. There are no scientific health studies on Navajo land that show how uranium and other heavy metals may affect the development of children.

The most recent results show some concern over how people build their fires, how they burn cool, wood, and if they drink water from local sources, the study is timely and the Navajo oral histories of traditional land use by families comes into play. Community elders and leaders who are willing to share their knowledge of the land and its significance to Navajo culture inform this study.

A story by Helen Nez in this issue, a Navajo matriarch from the Tachee community from Blue Gap, AZ tells how she testified before the U.S. Congress to emphaize the the need for a healthy bond between mom and baby to return to Navajo communities. Stories like hers, told in Navajo and English, informs the Navajo Birth Cohort Study.

-- Malcolm Benally
NBCS multi-media specialist
UNM CEHP

Groundbreaking ceremony for construction of new Kayenta Hospital staff housing. April 2014. Photo by Malcolm Benally.
Navajo Birth Cohort Study List of Resources

The Navajo Birth Cohort Study Resource Guide provides additional websites that share more Navajo Birth Cohort Study background, informational handouts, videos and other educational materials. Enjoy the links to related topics. Take a look at the work of some of our NBCS collaborators!

University of New Mexico, Community Environmental Health Program: http://nbcs.healthyvoices.org/

Recent articles, meeting notices, educational and promotional videos, background information.

Information and resources related to the DiNEH Project are at
http://hsc.unm.edu/pharmacy/HealthyVoices/Dineh_Project.html

Southwest Research and Information Center: http://src.org/nbcs/index.php

Brochure, timeline, background information handouts including two FAQs, radon and water quality fact sheets, recent presentations, NBCS newsletter.

Additional resources on related uranium issues are at http://src.org/uranium/rirf.php

CDC/ATSDR: Center for Disease Control/Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry: http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/navaio_birth_cohort_study/

Background on the Navajo Nation and the cohort study, links to related information in the federal Five-Year Plan, Report of the Five-Year Plan, and EPA Stakeholders meetings


All aspects of responses to the Navajo Uranium Legacy, including maps, atlases, data collections, site descriptions, stakeholder presentations. DiNEH Project & NBCS presentations are included under the “Stakeholder Workshops” tab at the top of the home page; click on each year of presentations to see our work over time.

Navajo Area Indian Health Service, Community Uranium Exposure-Journey To Healing (CUE-JTH) program:

Sign up for the CUE-JTH list serve at http://www.ihs.gov/listserv/topics/signup/?list_id=247


Community Health Representatives/Outreach Program under the Navajo Division of Health at: http://www.ndoh.org/chr.html

The Navajo Division of Health has a mission to move “towards a healthy future for the Navajo Nation with a commitment to serving the health and well-being of the Navajo people.” The Community Health Representatives, the CHR Outreach Program hired Community Health Environmental Health Research Specialists (CHERS) for the Navajo Birth Cohort Study. A small team of CHERS staff members have an office at each of the five participating hospitals on Navajo land.

Contact Information: Phone: (928) 871-6968, Fax (928)871-6255. Navajo Community Health Representatives, PO Box 1390, Window Rock, AZ 86515.

First Things First sponsored CPLC Parenting Arizona
http://www.parentingaz.org

CPLC Parenting Arizona has a vision “to create a community where parents have the skills to raise healthy and successful children.” Formerly known as Parents Anonymous, Chicanos por la Causa (CPLC) operates under the U.S. Health and Human Services Department. The study uses a foundational visit plan that will guide each visit that looks and improves on 1) family planning; 2) parent-child interaction; 3) development-centered parenting; and 4) family well-being. The program works with families to develop activities with baby. Parent Educators available in Kayenta, Ganado, Chinle, and Window Rock, AZ.

Contact Navajo reservation office: Tuba City, Main Street next to To’NaneesDizi Chapter, P.O. Box Tuba City, AZ 86045. Phone: (928) 283-4217. For information on services statewide, long onto website at www.parentingaz.org.

Jennifer Ong, UNM Ph.D. Candidate reports Year One findings from the Navajo Birth Cohort Study at the Tuba City Regional Health Care Center on July 17, 2014 in Tuba City, AZ. Photo by Malcolm Benally.

South to North view of the Shiprock monolith. According to the U.S. Census 2000, the population within the Shiprock area in San Juan County was 8,156 and has grown significantly. Photo by Malcolm Benally.