“Engaging in community-based participatory policy work to address obesity in tribal communities: The THRIVE study”

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Policy and environmental strategies to improve access to healthy foods are increasingly recommended to address obesity. Such strategies are critical in Native American communities where more than half of Native youth are overweight and obesity rates among both Native youth and adults continue to rise. Yet environmental approaches to address obesity are rare in tribal communities and must attend to the structural conditions that disproportionately expose these communities to risk, such as limited geographic access to healthy foods, as well as the diverse cultural, geographic, and political infrastructures that exist in sovereign tribal nations. The THRIVE study is a community-based participatory policy study with the goal of implementing “healthy makeovers” in tribally-owned convenience stores across the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations of Oklahoma. The study is based on several successful pilot studies that have used the THRIVE policy engagement framework, adapted and localized for tribal communities using video and web-based social marketing techniques, to facilitate community planning and channel collectively-defined recommendations to policymakers. This presentation will provide an overview of the THRIVE study design and methods and report upon the start-up work we have engaged in during the first year of implementation.

Learning objectives:
1) Identify geographic, structural, and political conditions that place tribal communities at risk for obesity
2) Discuss challenges and opportunities in engaging in a participatory policy work with tribal communities
3) Evaluate ways in which participatory policy work can mobilize communities toward policy selection and prioritization and advance translational and implementation science

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