The Road to Reproductive Justice

Native Americans in New Mexico

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southwest women's law center

FORWARD TOGETHER
Speakers

**Forward Together**
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**Indigenous Life Ways**
Krystal Curley, Executive Director

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Purpose of Research

- Indigenous communities have long been leading the fight to ensure the fundamental human rights of Indigenous/Native American women and families.
- Across the country, Native Americans are often labeled as “not statistically significant” in research on reproductive health, even though this community often suffers from deep inequalities in access to reproductive health and higher rates of victimization of sexual violence.
- The 2017 Rural New Mexico study provided some preliminary evidence that Native Americans who lived in rural New Mexico had progressive views in this policy area. This study was designed to follow up with a more focused survey of Native Americans in New Mexico.
About the Researchers

Survey Development and Research
Southwest Women’s Law Center, Forward Together, Latino Decisions. Part 1 of this research on rural New Mexico included the work of Bold Futures, Planned Parenthood, ACLU- NM.

Collaborating Organizations
Indigenous Life Ways and Tewa Women United

Data Compilation and Analysis
Latino Decisions. Additional national data analysis provided by Forward Together.
Key Findings
• Vast majority (89%) of Native Americans in NM agree that “Native American women and families deserve to make our own healthcare decisions without government interference.”

• Native Americans are not a monolithic group and are not anti-abortion. Rather, a majority of Native Americans in NM (72%) agree that women and families should be trusted to make their own personal decisions about abortion.

• We have much work to do to impact health disparities of Native Americans. Similar to national findings, our NM findings revealed that Native Americans have higher rates of both sexual violence and reproductive loss (miscarriage or still birth). Native Americans need access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare, including abortion care.
Research Methodology

- The study resulted in 302 completed interviews of Native American adults in New Mexico.
- To our knowledge this is the largest sample of Native Americans ever collected for the purposes of understanding experiences of Native Americans and attitudes toward reproductive health.
- This 2020 study was conducted between March 24 and April 7, and had 158 completed interviews over the phone (cell-phone/landline) and 144 web-based interviews.
Native Americans in the United States

- 60.4% White
- 18.3% Hispanic/Latino
- 13.4% Black
- 6.1% Asian Pacific Islanders
- 1.3% American Indian and Alaska Native
Native Americans in New Mexico

- 37.1% White
- 2.6% Black
- 2% Asian Pacific Islanders
- 49.1% Hispanic/Latino
- 10.9% American Indian and Alaska Native
States with similarities to New Mexico

Indigenous Populations by percentage
- Montana 8.3% (about 88,000 people)
- South Dakota 10.4% (about 92,000 people)
- New Mexico 10.8% (about 227,000 people)
- Oklahoma 13.5% (about 533,000 people)

Indigenous Populations by number of people
- New Mexico 226,911
- Washington 226,088
- New York 207,373
- North Carolina 205,652
Respondent Demographics

Art by Nani Chacon
Tribal Affiliation

- Dine/Navajo Nation: 53%
- Pueblo: 24%
- Mesquero, Apache Tribe: 1%
- Other: 11%
- Cherokee Nation: 3%
- Don't know: 7%
Are you an enrolled member of your tribe / pueblo / nation?

- **YES**: 77%
- **NO**: 18%
- **DON'T KNOW**: 5%
Reservation / Tribal Residence

- 49% on reservation / tribal lands
- 37% off reservation / tribal lands
- 14% both — split time across both areas
Gender

- 46% Male
- 52% Female
- 2% Transgender / Two Spirit
Age

- 33% 30-49
- 26% 18-29
- 22% 50-64
- 15% 65+

*Images of logos: southwest women's law center, Forward Together*
Income

13% $20K-$29,999K
37% LESS THAN 20K
5% $30K-$39,999K
6% $40K-$49,999K
6% 50K-$59,999K
8% $60K-$69,999K
4% 70K+$79,999K
5% 80K AND OVER
17% DON'T KNOW

SOUTHWEST WOMEN'S LAW CENTER
FORWARD TOGETHER
Tribal Voter Registration

- 60% Registered to Vote
- 15% No, but eligible
- 9% No, not eligible
- 6% No, but planning to register
- 5% Don't know
- 6% Does not hold elections/NA

[Graph showing the percentage distribution of tribal voter registration status.]
State Voter Registration

- 73% Registered to vote
- 12% No, but eligible
- 6% No, but planning to register
- 7% No, not eligible
- 2% Don't know
Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or something else?

- **Democrat**: 48%
- **Republican**: 15%
- **Independent**: 24%
- **Other Party**: 8%
- **Don't Know**: 6%
Perceptions Regarding Access to Reproductive Healthcare
Access to Reproductive Healthcare

1 in 5 Native Americans think their community does not have access to reproductive healthcare.

1 in 3 Urban Native Americans think their community does not have access to reproductive healthcare.
To the best of your knowledge, is there a doctor's office, hospital, or other health clinic that provides abortion in the community where you normally go to get healthcare?

- 50% NO
- 29% YES
- 21% DON'T KNOW
Reproductive Health vs. Abortion Care Access

ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE CARE

- Yes: 65%
- No: 22%
- Don't Know: 13%

ACCESS TO ABORTION CARE

- Yes: 29%
- No: 50%
- Don't Know: 21%
Clinic in Your Community that Provides Abortions

To the best of your knowledge, is there a doctor's office, hospital, or other health clinic that provides abortion in the community where you normally go to get healthcare?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don’t Know**

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Source of Reproductive Health Services for Native American Women in NM

Are you currently receiving reproductive healthcare services from either the Indian Health Service or a Tribal contract/638 contract health center?

- 57% NO
- 37% YES, IHS
- 4% YES, TRIBAL 638
- 2% DON'T KNOW
Thinking about receiving healthcare at Indian Health Service/Tribal centers, we are interested in hearing why you are not receiving your healthcare at Indian Health Service clinics.

- **29%** I am uncomfortable receiving my healthcare at IHS clinics
- **17%** The quality of care I receive
- **13%** Difficulty in getting an appointment
- **12%** Other
- **11%** Transportation issues getting to the clinic
- **10%** Confidentiality issues (people in my community work at the clinic)
- **7%** Do not provide the type of care that I need
- **5%** Do not provide reproductive healthcare that I need or want
Attitudes Regarding Abortion and Reproductive Health Policy in New Mexico

Art by Kirbie Platero
Native American New Mexicans believe in body autonomy

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree:

Native American women and families deserve to make our own healthcare decisions without government interference.

89% TOTAL AGREE

- STRONGLY AGREE: 55%
- AGREE: 26%
- NEITHER AGREE / DISAGREE: 8%
- DISAGREE: 5%
- STRONGLY DISAGREE: 4%
A majority of Native American New Mexicans believe doctors should *not* be criminalized for performing abortion.

Would you support or oppose a law that would make it a criminal offense for doctors to perform abortions?

- **Oppose Criminalization**: 45%
- **Support Criminalization**: 25%
- **Neither / Don't Have a Strong Opinion Either Way**: 27%
- **Prefer Not to Answer**: 3%

**By Party:**
- **Total**: 40%
- **GOP**: 47%
- **DEM**: 49%
- **IND**: 30%
Support for abortion increases when it is personal.

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with:

*If someone I care about has made the decision to have an abortion, I want them to have support.*

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Native American New Mexicans support self-determination in decision making on abortion.

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with:

*I can hold my own moral views about abortion and still trust a woman and her family to make this decision for themselves.*

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Agree with the statement: *I can hold my own moral views about abortion and still trust a woman and her family to make this decision for themselves.*

- **45%** agree
- **59%** disagree
- **14%** don't know / prefer not to answer

Agree with the statement: *If someone I care about has made the decision to have an abortion, I want them to have support.*

- **72%** agree
- **25%** disagree
- **14%** don't know / prefer not to answer

Would **oppose** a law that would make it a criminal offense for doctors to perform abortions.

- **45%** agree
- **25%** disagree
- **14%** don’t know / prefer not to answer
Personal Experiences and Challenges with Reproductive Health in New Mexico

Art by Melanie Cervantes
Barriers to Accessing Reproductive Healthcare

Thinking about accessing the reproductive health care that you and your family have needed, what are primary obstacles that have prevented you in the past or may prevent you in the future from accessing that care?

- Transportation issues: 27%
- Cost of accessing reproductive health: 17%
- Information on where to go for reproductive health: 9%
- There isn’t a clinic or healthcare facility close to where I live: 9%
- Pressure from family & friends about using reproductive healthcare: 5%
- Language barriers: 3%
- Other obstacles: 3%
Reproductive Health Experiences Among Native Americans in NM

1 in 5 have accessed or had a partner access abortion care

1 in 3 have a friend or a family member who has had an abortion
Reproductive Health Experiences Among Native Americans in NM

Have you or a partner of yours experienced infertility or trouble getting pregnant?

Many people in New Mexico experience miscarriage and still births. Have you or a partner of yours had similar experiences?

- Yes: 14%
- No: 21%

[Images of bar charts showing percentages]
Emotional Support Resources for Abortion

Who did you turn to for emotional support?

- Family member: 45%
- Friends: 41%
- Partner / Spouse: 27%
- I didn’t seek or need support: 25%
- Medical Provider: 17%
- Support forums on the internet: 12%
- I didn’t have the support I needed: 11%
- Faith leader: 5%
Have you ever considered having an abortion but ultimately decided not to?

- **83% NO**
- **17% YES**
What made you decide not to have an abortion?

- Turned out wasn’t pregnant and therefore didn’t need it: 35%
- I did not have access to a provider who could provide the procedure: 18%
- I decided I wanted to have the child: 27%
- Pressure from my parents/family: 12%
- Other: 32%
The Hyde Amendment

Since 1976, the Hyde Amendment has denied abortion coverage to anyone receiving healthcare through the federal government.

END HYDE NOW

Communities of color have always led the fight to end this RACIST ABORTION BAN. We honor this legacy of resistance and continue to fight for healthcare for ALL.

Art by Micah Bazant
Did you know that the federal law known as the Hyde Amendment does not allow the use of federal funds to provide abortion care at Indian Health Services clinics?
**The Hyde Amendment**

**ABORTION BANS IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS**

The federal government restricts abortion access through its roles as public insurer, employer and provider of healthcare services.

| Insurer | Medicaid  
|         | Medicare  
|         | Children’s Health Insurance Program  
| Employer | Federal Employees Health Benefits Program  
|         | TRICARE  
|         | Veterans Affairs  
| Provider of Care | Indian Health Service  
|                   | Peace Corps (volunteers)  
|                   | Bureau of Prisons  
|                   | Immigration and Customs Enforcement  

[Source: southwest women's law center]
Experiences with Domestic Violence

Unfortunately many Native Americans have experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives. Have you experienced domestic violence?

38% Yes

61% No

1% Don't Know
Experiences with Sexual Violence

Unfortunately many Native Americans have experienced sexual violence at some point in their life. What about you, have you ever been the victim of sexual assault or violence?

- 76% NO
- 3% DON'T KNOW
- 22% YES

Higher than national statistics that show: “Nearly 1 in 5 women (18.3%) and 1 in 71 men (1.4%) in the United States have been raped at some time in their lives.”
Has this experience [with sexual violence] influenced your views regarding whether a person should be able to access reproductive health care?

- Refused / Don’t know: 1%
- No, this experience has not had any impact on my views: 36%
- Yes, has made me realize we need less access to reproductive health in New Mexico: 4%
- Yes, has made me realize we need more access to reproductive health in New Mexico: 59%
Access to LARC Among Native American Women

As far as you know, does your health care provider offer LARC, including IUDs, Norplant or subdermal implants?

- 57% YES
- 25% NO
- 18% DON'T KNOW
Which comes closer to your experiences w/ LARC?

- Don’t know: 35%
- I have used LARC in the past but am not currently using it: 10%
- I am currently using LARC: 4%
- I have been prescribed LARC before by my healthcare provider but did not choose it at the time for my method of contraception: 3%
- I have never been prescribed LARC in the past and am not currently using it: 48%
Please tell us why you did not decide to use LARC when you were last prescribed for it?

- I have heard that this is a painful procedure: 18%
- I prefer other options: 27%
- I have heard that LARC can lead to problems with pregnancy: 67%
- I felt pressured not to take it: 15%
Conclusion
• Native Americans in New Mexico are diverse in identity and experiences.

• Majority of those surveyed (89%) want families to have decision making power over their own healthcare without government interference.

• Majority of those surveyed (72%) trust women and families to make their own decisions about abortion and 71% want loved ones to have support.

• Majority of those surveyed are deeply impacted by health disparities and need policy and community solutions that increase access to reproductive healthcare and the underlying issues that impact wellbeing and safety.
The reproductive health, rights and justice movement must include and center Indigenous voices, as well as those of Black communities and people of color. Many Native Americans believe in the reproductive justice values of self-determination and body sovereignty, respect in healthcare decision making, and reproductive health care access for all people.

This polling uses data points to dispel myths and remind folks of what’s real. Additional research that is community centered and reflects the healthcare realities and perspectives of Native Americans must be prioritized.
Contact

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Questions and Discussion

Art by Nani Chacon