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Partnership for Pediatric Environmental Health on the Flathead Reservation

Background: This project contributes to work underway by the Partnership for Pediatric Environmental Health (PPEH), a research team investigating potential exposure to environmental toxins and the disproportionately high infant mortality rates among Montana Native communities. Purpose: This project will bring previously identified environmental themes from focus groups, conducted by Milissa Grandchamp, a recent MSU graduate student, back to community members for further analysis and insight. Methods: A literature review was conducted to examine project methods and themes identified within the Grandchamp thesis. Then, using a community-based participatory research approach, interviews will be conducted through an expert elicitation interview process. Lastly, a qualitative approach will then be used to assess the results of these interviews. Results: The literature review revealed several ways of adapting the community-based participatory research process to better fit within Native American communities as well as describing various benefits of this approach. Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, drugs/alcohol and methylmercury, as identified themes, were explored to reveal proposed interventions from several indigenous focus groups. Conclusion: Community-based participatory research is an effective method for addressing environmental health needs in Native American populations. The results from the literature review will continue to guide the project as it moves forward.