

Critical factors related to communication of nutrition information targeting Lumbee women in Robeson County, NC.

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Abstract: The current state of nutrition communication is not effective for Lumbee tribal women in Robeson County, North Carolina. Interviews with Lumbee women leaders representing tribal, health, and lay circles along with a review of the literature show changes to critically important factors are needed for Lumbee women to benefit from nutrition communications.

This nonexperimental, descriptive study shows that effective nutrition communication changes consider and reflect Lumbee tribal culture. Further, Lumbee women must become fully engaged in all aspects of nutrition communication including planning, intervention, and policy-making. Lumbee women are leaders who call for an urgent focus on nutrition communication to reduce the occurrence of diet-related diseases. They are interested in supporting Lumbee women to improve their dietary behaviors. Leadership and nutrition training opportunities along with mentor programs will encourage Lumbee women to fully engage in nutrition communication change efforts. The Lumbee tribal organization has experience as a collaborative partner on behalf of tribal members and has existing resources useful for nutrition communication. Thus, this organization is the key agency to lead efforts for nutrition communication changes.

A coalition should be formed of collaborative partners drawn from Lumbee women, the Lumbee Tribe organization, and agencies committed to Lumbee women's nutritional health. Collaborative partners should develop plans, influence policies, and determine measures that address cultural, socioeconomic, contextual, and other challenges to effective nutrition communications for Lumbee women. This guiding coalition should consider ways to encourage support by Lumbee tribal members, local churches and religious leaders, healthcare organizations, food industry members, and employers. A plan based on study findings and leadership principles is included as a guide to establishing a system of effective nutrition communication strategies for Lumbee women in Robeson County, NC.

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