

**American Indian and Alaska Native
Long Term Care Conference**
Circles of Care: Providing Choices to Elders and Families

May 4 – 6, 2010
Phoenix - Scottsdale, Arizona

Speaker Biographies

Patricia Atkinson was born and raised in Alaska and has worked for over 20 years to develop a variety of health and education programs in rural areas. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from University of Alaska Fairbanks, and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Alaska Pacific University. Originally certified as a high school science teacher; she created and delivered training on child abuse prevention in Alaska, and developed and managed a comprehensive school-based teen/parent program in Oregon. She managed the implementation of the Denali KidCare (Alaska's SCHIP) program in western and arctic Alaska and has worked on other health access improvement programs for children, adults, and elders.

Carrie Bear Chief graduated from Salish Kootenai Tribal College with an AAS in Office Professions. Ms. Bear Chief has been working at the Eagle Shield Center since 2002. She has had comprehensive training in coordination with the family caregiver services, the respite program and the grandparent raising grandchildren project. Ms. Bear Chief also works with AARP as the Community Outreach Volunteer to help AARP in successfully reaching Native American Communities with resources and services. She is also the Associate Pastor of The Browning Evangelistic Center. She, along with four other Native American Driver Safety Instructors was awarded for efforts in bringing the AARP Driver Safety Course to six reservations in Montana.

Peg Blakely is a licensed social worker and director of the Elders department at the Leech Lake Reservation Health Division, where she has been employed for six years. She is a LTC consultant and case manager for the department's Waiver Program. Prior to that, she served as Coordinator of Anishinaabeg Minosewag Behavioral Health Program. She has 15 years of experience working with the Native American population as an In-Home Family Social Worker, Children's Mental Health Case Manager and Lead Case Manager in the Cass Lake area.

Kay Branch is employed as the Elder/Rural Health Program Coordinator at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, focusing on the health status and long-term care needs of Alaska Native Elders. She has over 15 years of experience working with Alaska Native elders, including Older Americans Act programs, personal care services, assisted living, and workforce development issues. Under agreement with the Indian Health Service, Ms. Branch provides technical assistance in long-term care service development to IHS Elder Care Grantees. She received a bachelor's degree in anthropology from the University of Alaska Anchorage, and a master's degree in applied anthropology from the University of South Florida, with a focus in gerontology, specifically related to American Indian and Alaska Native elders.

Connie Bremner is a Tribal elder who has been the Director of the Eagle Shield Center for the past 15 years. She currently directs and oversees four programs. Ms. Bremner has worked intermittently for the Blackfeet Tribe since 1962. While with the Tribe, she served as the Director of the Blackfeet Housing Authority, the BIA funded Home Improvement Program, and Community Development Block Grant. Connie also directed other programs, such as the State Weatherization Program and the DOE Weatherization Program. She has won many prestigious awards, including her recent election to serve on the Governor's Advisory Council on Disability and attending the White House Conference on Aging as a National Indian Council on Aging representative.



Robin R. Carufel is Lac Du Flambeau Ojibwe and Flandreau Santee Sioux. Mr. Carufel is a traditional singer and dancer and has over 12 years experience as a Health Administrator and Director for the Nay Ah Shing Health Center-Milles Lacs Band of Minnesota Chippewa Tribes and the Peter Christensen Health Center. Mr. Carufel currently serves as Vice President of Tribal Health Consulting with All Nations Risk Services LLC and as an American Indian History and Cultural Consultant. Mr. Carufel serves as a consultant for the National Indian Health Board in Washington, DC, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe at Cass Lake, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin at Oneida, as well as many others across the nation.

Juanita K. Correa, LNHA (Kathy), is a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator in the State of New Mexico and has a Bachelors Degree in Health Science from NMSU with an emphasis in Community Health. Ms. Correa has a combination of 25 years of experience working in the field of Geriatrics, both institutional and community-based programs. She has practiced as a Nursing Home Administrator since 1990, both in the private and non-profit sector. Ms. Correa is currently the Executive Director of Laguna Rainbow Corporation which provides a continuum of LTC services, both institutional and community based services.

Sara Del Norte, No Biography Provided.

Bruce Finke, MD, is a family physician and geriatrician and serves as the national lead in Elder Care and Palliative Care for the Indian Health Service. Since 1998, he has provided support to tribal, IHS, and urban programs in the development of improved clinical and preventive care for the elderly. He has had a leadership role in the development of long term care policy, in support of tribal long term care programs, and in the development of palliative care resources in Indian health. Dr. Finke has been a member of the Chronic Care Initiative team since the summer of 2006.

Wendell Holt has provided direction, assistance, and outreach for GLITC Education and Human Services programs since joining Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council in 2003. This includes Administration on Aging Senior Medicare Patrol and Integration grants, development and facilitation of the Wisconsin Tribal Aging Directors Association, implementing and facilitating Wisconsin Department of Health Services Tribal Family Care Planning grant, development of the GLITC Tribal Technical Assistance Center, and the issuance of the Disability Benefits Specialist positions at GLITC. In addition, Mr. Holt facilitates the consultation process between DHS and the eleven Tribes in cooperation with DHS Tribal Affairs and the Wisconsin Tribal Health Directors Association.

Margaret R. Garcia, a tribal member of the Pueblo of Santa Ana, New Mexico, has made a career administering tribal senior programs for several years. For six years she served as a Housing Commissioner for her tribe and recently served on the Pueblo of Jemez Housing Advisory Council representing the housing needs of the low-income and elderly populations. Currently, Ms. Garcia is the Senior Citizens Program Manager for Pueblo of Jemez, and oversees a wide range of home and community-based services including nutrition, support services, transportation, case management, and physical fitness programs.

Rick Greene, MSW, is a National Program Manager for the Department of Veterans Affairs where he has responsibility for Adult Day Health, Medical Foster Care, Rural Health, and other community-based services. Prior to joining the VA in 2009, he was the Director of the National Family Caregiver Support Program for the Administration on Aging.

Carrie Jackson, AAS, (Blackfeet) has worked at the Eagle Shield Center for the Blackfeet Tribe in Montana since 2002 as the Direct Support Coordinator. Carrie has had extensive training in all aspects of family caregiver services. She also serves as the Community Outreach Coordinator to help AARP successfully reach Native American Communities with resources and services. Ms. Jackson is the Associate Pastor of The Browning Evangelistic Center, where she works with the Ministry of Help, Teaching and Praise Team. She was also awarded for her efforts in bringing the AARP Driver Safety Course to six reservations in Montana, along with four other Native American Driver Safety Instructors.



M. Yvonne Jackson, PhD, (Cherokee) received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wyoming, a Master of Science degree from the University of North Carolina and a PhD from the University of Tennessee, all in human nutrition. In her current position, she advocates for Indian elders, provides leadership on Indian elder issues, and administers grants for nutrition, health, and social services for elders. Her prior work experience includes serving as Chief of the Nutrition Section at the Indian Health Service, as a Nutrition Specialist with the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, and university teaching.

Karen Leekity has been with the Zuni Senior Center Programs for 21 years in different capacities starting out as secretary. She has been in her current position of Elderly Services Director for 10 years. Ms. Leekity is a Certified Public Manager thru USDA Graduate School, Washington, DC, and a Bachelors in University Studies from University of New Mexico and her AA in Business Administration from UNM.

Susan Levy is the Community Relations Coordinator for NATIVE HEALTH and has worked with them for nearly five years. Prior to providing community relations at NATIVE HEALTH she was Program Manager for their Adult Day Health Care Program. She worked on instituting this program for over four years. She has experience opening and running Adult Day Health Care Centers and was on the Board of the Arizona Association of Adult Day Health Care Programs. She holds a Bachelor of Science and a Certificate of Gerontology from Arizona State University.

Dorothy Low, ANP, Nurse Manager, Tohono O’odham Hospice, holds a Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Arizona and has 30 years of experience as a registered nurse. Originally from Michigan, she has lived and worked on the Tohono O’odham Reservation since 1998. She has been employed by AHSSSNF and TOH for the past five years.

Stephanie Marrama has over 12 years of nursing experience in managed care, clinical, public health, and hospital settings. She has experience working with state and federal healthcare regulations, and was awarded the Commander’s Award for excellence in civilian service. Ms. Marrama holds a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from St. Anselm College in New Hampshire, and a Bachelor of Science in Management, Master of Science in Healthcare Administration, and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Maryland. Stephanie currently works for the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium where she is responsible for managing the Quality Improvement program in 11 remote clinics, risk management and credentialing processes, accreditation compliance, village case management and safety and infection control.

Lucinda Martin, No Biography Provided.

Donna Miller, RN, earned her MPA and BS degree from State University of New York, Brockport, New York. She has over 20 years experience as an administrator of long-term care and rehab facilities in New York, and also served as a medical-legal consultant. She is currently the Administrator for SEARHC Alicia Roberts Medical Center in Klawock, Alaska.

Marianne Mills holds her MBA from the University of Alaska with a focus on Organizational Theory and Human Resources, and an MSW from San Diego State University. Ms. Mills has extensive experience in writing grant proposals, planning and developing programs and services for senior citizens, and presently serves as a Program Director for Southeast Senior Services/Catholic Community Service.

Lee H. Olitzky, MA, is an administrator with Archie Hendricks Sr., a skilled Nursing Facility and the Tohono O’odham Hospice. Mr. Olitzky is the Principal of WiT2, LLC, a health care consulting and management firm that specializes in American Indian elder care. Mr. Olitzky has worked in the field of elder care, health, government and higher education since 1975.



Cindy Padilla was appointed to the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary on Aging in December 2009 and most recently served as the Secretary of the New Mexico Aging & Long Term Services Department. Ms. Padilla holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and studied Public Administration at the University of New Mexico Graduate School of Public Administration. As the Secretary of the New Mexico Aging and Long Term Services Department, Ms. Padilla managed many programs that focused on Independence and Dignity for older New Mexicans and people living with disabilities. She brings her state experience in elder justice – protection, intervention, and advocacy - Aging Network services, Long Term Care Ombudsman, consumer and elder rights, as well as her work with New Mexico's Tribes, Pueblos, and the Navajo Nation to Washington, DC, with a focus on people.

David Peters is a retired US Air Force Colonel and a five-time Commander. Dave has led two Alaska Native Corporations, and managed nationally prominent programs including the Alaska Federal Health Care Partnership's Clinical Outcomes Program representing Alaska to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. Dave has been Department of Defense's (DOD) Worldwide Pollution Prevention Program Manager, representative to the National Congress of American Indians, chair of DOD's Environmental, Safety and Occupational Health Committee as well as manager of the National Strategic Reserve of Ozone Depleting Substances and a negotiator on the International Climate Treaty.

David Reede has worked to improve the lives of Apache people for many years. His experience includes the direction of three programs within the San Carlos Apache Tribe. These programs include the Recreation Department, the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program and the Wellness Center. In the fall of 2005, he was elected into the San Carlos Apache Tribal Government as a Councilman for the Gilson Wash District, where he focused on economic development and community empowerment. David is a graduate of Northern Arizona University with a Baccalaureate Degree in Education. Mr. Reede is also a graduate of the Central Arizona College Police Academy.

Rick Richards has served as the Chief Executive Officer for Cherokee Nation Home Health Services for 14 years. During that time, the agency has grown from 26 employees serving 60 clients to an agency with 200 employees serving over 500 clients. Prior to his time at Cherokee Nation Home Health Services, Rick worked as a Nursing Home Administrator and a Medicare consultant assisting Skilled Nursing Facilities in securing their Medicare certification status. Rick graduated from NSU with a BS in Administration of Allied Health Services after working in the family business at Blue Ribbon Downs and a four year tour with the 82nd Airborne Division of the US Army. While in the Army, Rick earned the Distinguished Graduate honor from the Seventh Infantry Divisions Non-Commissioned Officers Academy and a Battalion Distinguished Trooper Award.

Katrinka (Katie) Smith Sloan is chief operations officer (COO) and senior vice president of strategy for the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA). In this position, she is the key leader for all of AAHSA's operations and membership-related initiatives and services. She joined AAHSA in April 2002, after having served in a number of key leadership positions at AARP. As a member of AARP's senior leadership team, Sloan has a strong commitment to the consumer movement, and serves as secretary-treasurer of the Consumer Federation of America. She has a bachelor's degree from Middlebury College and a master's degree from the George Washington University.

Frances Stout, a retired registered nurse, is a member of the Tohono O'odham Nation who lived her childhood on the Navajo Nation and attended the Ganado Mission High School. She attended the Methodist Hospital of Dallas School of Nursing. In 1977 she received her Bachelor of Arts in Public Management from Saint Mary's College of California. Her entire nursing career of 33 years was spent in the Indian Health Service in the area of nursing administration. Since retirement she has continued to work in the area of health care. In 2009 she received the Community Health Leader Award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She has chaired the Tohono O'odham Nursing Care Authority Board for the past two terms.



Joanne Wiita is the Planning and Grants Coordinator for Tlingit-Haida Regional Housing Authority, the Tribal Designated Housing Entity that provides affordable housing throughout southeast Alaska. She consults regularly with Tribes to help create synergistic solutions to rural community needs. Ms. Witta came to the Housing Authority in 2007 with 15 years of project planning and management experience, handling both logistics and marketing for multiple Native Corporations throughout Alaska. Born in Minnesota and adopted by the Kwaashkikwaan Clan of the Raven Moiety, she now resides in Juneau, Alaska.

Wanda Yazzie MPH, BSN, RN is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation and calls her traditional home, Lukachukai, AZ. She was born to To'aheeliinii (Water Flows Together Clan), and born for To'dich'ii'nii (Bitter Water Clan). She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of New Mexico, graduated with honors Cum Laude, and a Masters of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University. Through her extensive work experiences with private and public sectors including Indian Health Service and the NM State Department of Health, she has increased her knowledge regarding dealing with special populations.

Anita Yuskauskas is currently the Technical Director for Quality in Home and Community Based Services with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. She was previously a Waiver Analyst at CMS and was involved with the Independence Plus Initiative and tribal issues. Preceding her federal tenure, Dr. Yuskauskas served as a Division Chief in Hawaii's Department of Health, overseeing the developmental disabilities, Hansen's disease, and brain injury programs. She also served as Chief Policy Analyst for the Center for Outcome Analysis in Rosemont, Pennsylvania. Dr. Yuskauskas received her PhD in Rehabilitation from Syracuse University. She conducted numerous program evaluation and qualitative research projects specializing in organizational change, and taught undergraduate and graduate courses in human services and special education.

Shelly Zylstra, PhD, currently works as a planner for nutrition programs in Northwest Washington State. She is fortunate to have relationships with the elders of several tribes in her area, the Lummi Nation, Nooksack, Samish, Upper Skagit, Swinomish, and Sauk Suiattle Tribes. She has assisted in teaching at the 2007 Title VI National Forum in Baltimore, MD, and at various Administration on Aging Cluster Trainings.

