



Cancer on the Fort Belknap Reservation

CANCER BURDEN FACTS

This fact sheet provides information describing the burden of cancer among American Indians living on or near the Fort Belknap Reservation. American Indian residents of Blaine and Phillips Counties were used to estimate the burden of cancer on the Fort Belknap Reservation.

- **134 American Indians on the Fort Belknap Reservation were diagnosed with cancer from 2012 –2021. Therefore, on average there are 13 new cases each year.**
- **Cancer incidence on the Fort Belknap Reservation was not significantly different than among White residents of the reservation counties (Figure 1).**
- **Five (5) kinds of cancer account for 68% of all cancers that occur on the Fort Belknap Reservation (Figure 2).**
- **Lung cancer had significantly more cases diagnosed on the Fort Belknap Reservation than would be expected if the rate were the same as White residents in the region (Figure 2).**
- **51 American Indians on the Fort Belknap Reservation died because of cancer from 2012–2021. That is on average 5 deaths each year.**

Montana Cancer Control Programs

1400 E Broadway

Helena, Montana 59260-2951

(406) 444-2732

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/Cancer/DataStatistics>



Figure 1: All-site cancer incidence (new cases) rates among American Indian residents compared to White residents, Montana, 2012–2021

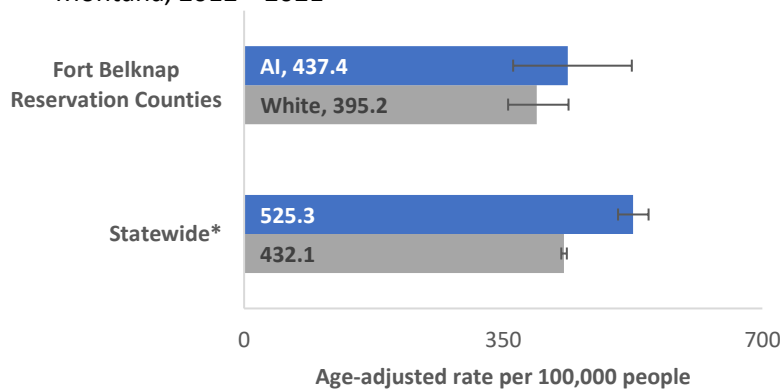
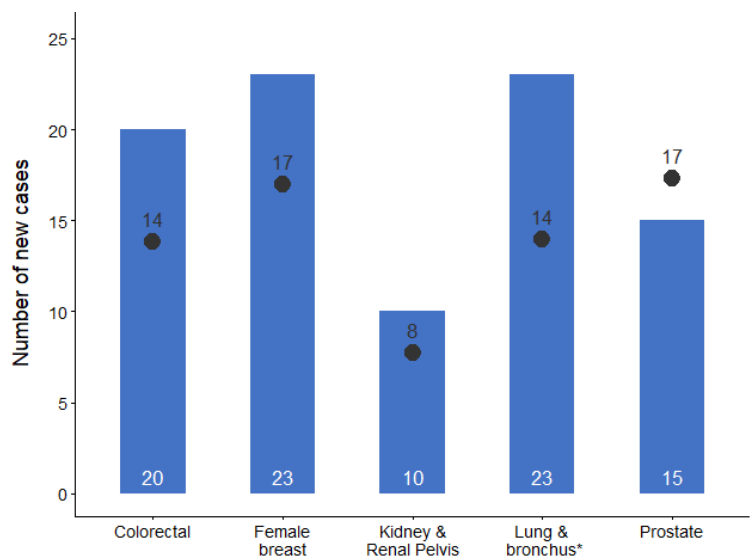


Figure 2: Observed compared to expected (●) number of new cases of cancer by cancer site among American Indian residents of the Fort Belknap Reservation Counties, 2012–2021



Source: MT Tumor Registry

*Statistically significantly different (p < 0.05)





Cancer on the Fort Belknap Reservation

- **Cancer mortality on the Fort Belknap Reservation was not significantly different than among White Montanans in the reservation counties and statewide (Figure 3).**

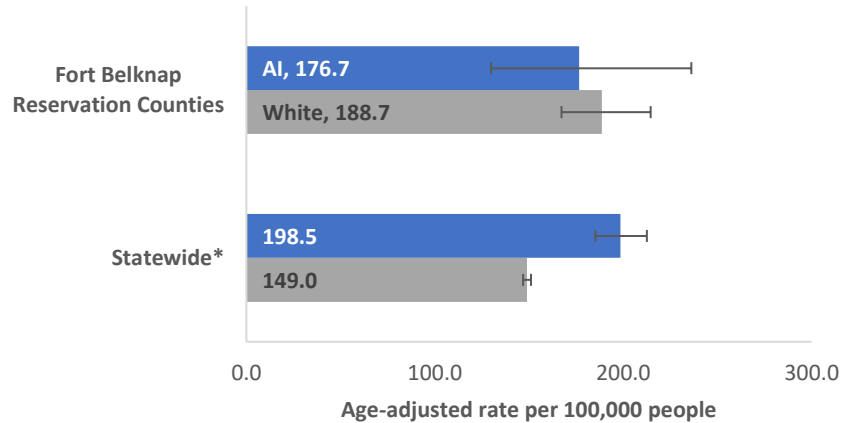
Key facts about cancer prevention and early detection

- **More than half (58%) of Montana American Indian adults have been screened for colorectal cancer. This was lower than the percentage of White Montanans (Figure 4).**
- **Obesity was also high among Montana American Indians (Figure 5). Obesity increases the risk of several types of cancer including breast, colorectal, and kidney cancers.**
- **Percent of American Indian adults who report themselves as a current cigarette smoker fell from 31% in 2021 to 25% in 2023 (Figure 5). This indicates an important, positive trend, which must continue as smoking greatly increases a person's risk for getting at least 13 types of cancer, including lung, colorectal, and kidney. Smoking among Montana American Indians remains higher than in White Montanans (Figure 5).**

†Women aged 50+ who have had a mammogram within the past two years were up to date on breast cancer screening; women aged 21-65 years who have had a pap test within the past three years were up to date on cervical cancer screening; men and women aged 50-75 who have had colonoscopy in the past 10 years, flexible sigmoidoscopy in the past 5 years, or a blood stool test in the past 1 year were up to date on colorectal cancer screening.

¹Colorectal and Breast data are from 2022, cervical cancer data is from 2020

Figure 3: All-site cancer mortality rates among **American Indian** residents compared to **White** residents, Montana, 2012—2021



Source: MT Vital Statistics

Figure 4: Percent of adults who are up to date† on Colorectal, Cervical, and Breast Cancer screening among **American Indian** residents compared to **White** residents, Montana¹.

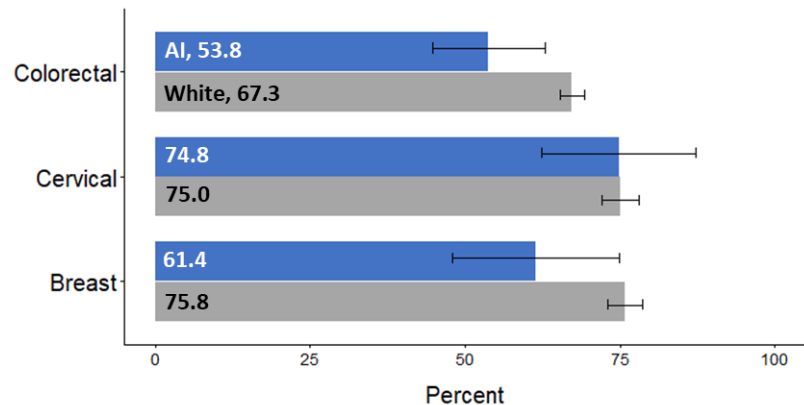
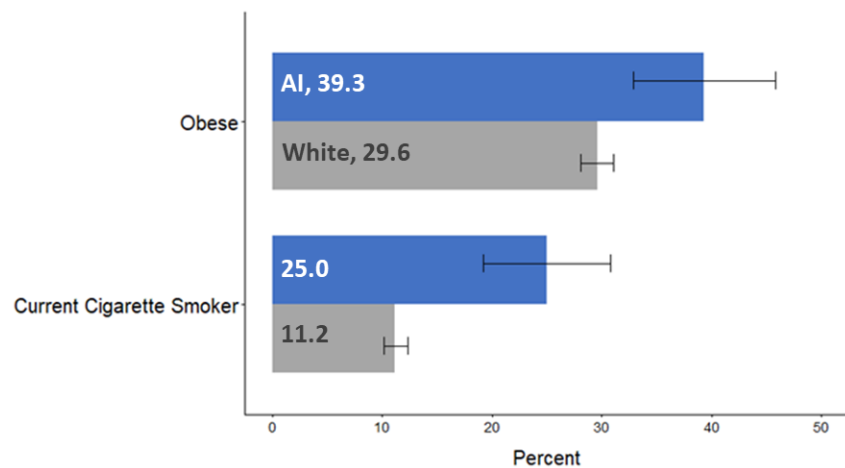


Figure 5: Proportion of adults who are a current smoker or obese among **American Indian** residents compared to **White** residents, Montana, 2023



Source: MT Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System