

# Center for Health Equity Transformation

October 16, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

This week, we have commemorated Indigenous People's Day. As noted by the Smithsonian Institution, “Generations of Native people throughout the Western Hemisphere have protested Columbus Day. In the forefront of their minds is the fact the colonial takeovers of the Americas, starting with Columbus, led to the deaths of millions of Native people and the forced assimilation of survivors.” It is an impossible task to condense recognition and awareness of millions of lives over thousands of years into one single day. Moving forward, however, CHET wants to acknowledge Native people--past, present, and future- and hope that others will join us in this recognition.

We have been extremely fortunate to have the guidance of Chris Pool, Professor of Anthropology, who has led us to Gwynn Henderson, Educational Director of the KY Archaeological Survey in the Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology at Western Kentucky University. Gwynn and her colleague, David Pollack and others, have spent their careers gaining expertise in historical and contemporary perspective on KY's Native peoples. I am sharing with you a chapter that Gwynn and David co-authored, which should give you rich knowledge about the lands on which we currently dwell and those who came before us and who still live among us.

I had asked for assistance in acknowledging and recognizing Native people in the past and present, particularly regarding the land in which we are located. Gwynn recommended proclaiming and using the following important statement:

*The Center for Health Equity Transformation (CHET), Lexington Kentucky, is located on the original homeland of diverse Native peoples who arrived over 10,000 years ago. The most recent among them were the Shawnee. Today, Kentucky is still home to over 25,000 Native people representing scores of tribal groups. CHET recognizes the injustices Native peoples have endured. Through this statement, we hope to begin the long process of healing.*

We will be adding that statement to our website and to as many CHET materials as possible. As an additional recommendation, we suggest that our affiliates and all others learn about Native communities by reading the attached chapter, visiting the websites below, and considering adding a statement and pursuing action of your own.

With best wishes, Nancy

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Additional Resources:

“The Myth of Kentucky As A ‘Dark and Bloody Ground’”

- <https://30daysofkentuckyarchaeology.wordpress.com/2017/09/29/the-myth-of...>

A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgement - <https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

Native American treaties - <https://www.archives.gov/press/press-releases/2021>

 [Native America Historical Encyclopedia 2012 Kentucky Chapter.pdf](#)

