Dear AAIP Members and Friends,

I am honored to once again serve as President of the Association of American Indian Physicians. We have grown tremendously in the 24 years since I first became a member. In those 24 years, I have seen American Indian and Alaska Native college students become medical students – the medical students become physicians – and the physicians become leaders in Indian health. I have seen our senior AAIP members become the elder statesmen and women of our organization and Indian health.

If I were to name one thing that has become clear to me over these years it is the importance of our members to AI/AN health care. The primary goal of the Founding Members of the AAIP was to increase the number of Native American physicians. The wisdom of this has become self-evident. Indian physicians now play a major role in improving the health of our people and in our Indian Health Care System.

AAIP members serve the IHS from the front lines of clinical medicine to the top ranks. We serve in reservation and urban Indian communities from coast to coast. Member physicians help train our future Indian physicians. AAIP members have become leading researchers in Indian health. Member physicians advocate for Indian health by serving on advisory committees for government and professional societies and on medical school admissions committees, advocating for Native American patients, and promoting cultural competence.

To this day, the AAIP is dedicated to improving the health of our people by increasing the number of AI/AN physicians. In addition, the Association advocates for the respect and practices of our healing brothers and sisters in Traditional Indian medicine. As Indian people ourselves, we understand that the healing arts in our communities did not begin with the practice of Western medicine. The healing of our bodies, minds, and spirits has no single method.

As always, the challenges facing us in Indian health are daunting. Our people continue to suffer disproportionately from early death and devastating diseases. While we continue our efforts to bring more Native people into medicine, it is clear that we must join others in these efforts. To that end, we hope to renew and strengthen our partnerships with other Native organizations with similar goals. We will make this a central effort of the AAIP for this year.

Thank you all for continuing your efforts to improve the health of our people.

Gerald Hill, MD
AAIP President 2008-09
NEW BOARD MEMBER PROFILES

LeeAnna Muzquiz, M.D.
Dr. LeeAnna Muzquiz grew up on the Flathead Indian Reservation in northwestern Montana. She is a graduate of the Regional Medical School Program of Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI). A member of the Salish and Kootenai tribes, Dr. Muzquiz is a primary care physician in Montana.

Phillip Smith, M.D.
Dr. Phil Smith earned his undergraduate and Doctor of Medicine degrees from the University of Utah. He was awarded a fellowship to study at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences where he earned his Master’s of Public Health degree. Dr. Smith began his career with the National Health Services Corp working with migrant clinics. In 1983, he joined the Indian Health Service. His colleagues honored him as the AAIP Physician of the Year for 2004-2005.

James R. Kennedye, M.D.
Dr. James R. Kennedye was raised in Oklahoma City, OK. He received his undergraduate degree from Oklahoma City University. While attending the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, he worked at the Oklahoma City Clinic. He entered his residency in emergency medicine at Washington University in St. Louis, MO. Dr. Kennedye is an emergency physician at INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center. He is also a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Naval Reserves.
ERIK R. BRODT RECEIVES RESIDENT AWARD

Erik R. Brodt, M.D., is among 20 Family Medicine trainees in the United States selected this year to receive the AAFP/Bristol Meyers Squibb Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education. Dr. Brodt is a member of the Chippewa/Anishinaabe tribe. He is a third year resident with the Swedish Cherry Hill Family Medicine in Seattle, WA, where he was named resident of the year. Dr. Brodt graduated in 2006 from the University of Minnesota-Duluth and is an Associate Member of AAIP.

ENDOCRINOLOGY FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Oklahoma City Area Indian Health Service in conjunction with the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OUHSC), Section of Endocrinology & Diabetes and the Harold Hamm Oklahoma Diabetes Center is actively requesting candidates to apply for a two-year Endocrinology fellowship program. A description of the fellowship program can be found at http://w3.ouhsc.edu/Endocrinology/Fellowship%20Program.asp. Interested applicants must hold U.S. Citizenship. American Indians are strongly encouraged to apply. Upon completion of the fellowship training, a two-year payback will take place at the Oklahoma City Area Indian Health Service in the role of Area Consultant for Endocrinology. For more information, contact Carla Deal, Fellowship Coordinator, at carla-deal@ouhsc.edu or (405) 271-3613.

COMMONWEALTH FUND / HARVARD UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP IN MINORITY HEALTH POLICY

At the Harvard Medical School - Boston
Applications now accepted for a 1-year, full-time fellowship beginning July 2009. Program prepares physicians for leadership positions in minority health policy and public health. Incorporates intensive training in health policy, public health and administration. Will complete academic work leading to a master's degree at Harvard School of Public Health. Full graduate program includes courses, seminars, leadership forums, practicum, site visits and mentoring by senior faculty and public health leaders.

The Fellowship also offers the MPA degree at Harvard's Kennedy School to physicians who already have an MPH.

Qualifications - BC/BE required, experience with minority health issues, interest in public policy and public health, and U.S. citizenship.
Salary/Benefits - $50,000 stipend, master's degree tuition, health insurance, travel for professional meetings and site visits.
Application Deadline - January 2, 2009

Contact
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Underrepresented Minorities and Women are Encouraged to Apply
Approximately 300 people attended the conference that included a medical school Pre-Admission Workshop, women’s retreat, golf outing, sweat ceremony, boat cruise, fun run, gourd dance and Presidential Reception. The participants attended the annual Coeur d’Alene July’amsh Feast and Pow Wow in Post Falls, Idaho. The Coeur d’Alene Stick Games were held in the Casino Hotel much to the delight of the conference participants.

The theme of the conference “Listen! The Eagles Are Calling: Our Native Youth Cry Out for Healing” echoed throughout the week with various presentations and the inclusion of youth from the Coeur d’Alene Tribe sharing some of their comments on what issues they were concerned with. The conference logistics were a challenge because some of the students and AAIP staff stayed at the Shilo Hotel in Coeur d’Alene while other conference participants stayed at the Coeur d’Alene Casino Hotel and Resort in Worley, ID. Many of the sessions and exhibits were held at the Coeur d’Alene Tribal Wellness Center and at the newly built Golf Pavilion. However, everyone was transported to each venue without any problems. The hotel provided an excellent transportation system.

The following is a conference recap from the AAIP Executive Director:

Thursday, July 24, 2008

In partnership with the University of Minnesota-Duluth, Center of American Indian and Minority Health, a medical school pre-admission workshop was
held for pre-med undergraduate students. The 25 students were recruited from various universities and colleges from across the nation. The sessions covered topics such as an Introduction to the University of Minnesota Medical School by Dr. Joy Dorscher, Director of the Center of American Indian & Minority Health; Health Disparities in Native American Communities and the Application Process by Dr. Michael Arredondo; Financial Aid & Scholarships, Dr. Phillip Smith, Medical Director from the Indian Health Service; MCAT Preparation, and How to Apply to Medical School and Developing Your Personal Statement by Marilyn Becker, PhD, Director of Lerner Development from the University of Minnesota-Duluth. A student mixer was held to end Wednesday’s sessions and provide an opportunity for the pre-med students to network and meet the Native medical students and physicians in an informal setting.

Friday, July 25, 2008

Friday’s session began with a medical student panel to discuss their journey to medical school and barriers they had to overcome. A physician panel composed of Drs. Amy DeLong, Kansas Dubray, Lana White King and Joy Dorsher was held to also discuss their journey to becoming a physician. A lunch sponsored by the American Psychiatric Association was provided for the students. Dr. Lynn Ponton of the University of California San Francisco was the luncheon speaker and her topic was “Risk-Taking Among Native American Youth” which was well received by everyone attending the luncheon.

Paul T. White, JD, Assistant Dean of Admissions from the University of Minnesota Medical School started the afternoon with his topic, “Developing Your Personal Statement,” which followed his morning session on “How to Apply to Medical School”. The ever-popular “Mock Interviews” was the next step in the workshop. The interviews were conducted by AAIP Physicians and role models: Shanda Lohse, Gerald Hill, Lise Alexander, LeeAnna Muzquiz, Lyle Ignace, Phillip Smith and Shannon Wiegand. As the interviews were being conducted Drs. Marilyn Becker and Lana White King held a large circle discussion for students not in their mock interviews. The pre-admission workshop came to an end with a presentation by Norma I. Poll, PhD, Juan Amador and Amy Addams regarding AAMC’s Building Diversity in the Physician Workforce.

Additional student sessions were conducted on Friday for students interested in research, professional development and cancer research. Dr. Lawrence Agodoa and Winnie Martinez of NIDDK conducted a luncheon and workshop for students interested in research particularly at NIDDK. Dr. Terry Maresca with the University of Washington School of Medicine and Native American Center of Excellence conducted a medical student program session, “History of American Indian Health”. Professional development workshops were held for residents, including “Negotiating a Contract” by Dr. Susan Sloan, Director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program at Easton Hospital in Easton, PA and a “Talking Circle for Residents” conducted by Dr. Joy Dorscher. Finally, a session was conducted by Paulette Baukol, Program Coordinator for the AI/AN Leadership Initiative, regarding Cancer Research Training Programs. These sessions were a great opportunity for students and residents to learn about the many programs available to them as they continue to prepare for their careers as a health professional.

A poster session and contest were held on Friday, July 26 from 1 – 5 p.m. Poster presentations were given and judged by AAIP member physicians. Twelve posters were submitted for consideration and topics ranged from “An Interesting Clinical Presentation of Eosinophilia” to “Complications of Renal Artery Angioplasty and Stenting”. Winners of the competition were announced at the 7
Presidential Reception.

The Annual Women’s Retreat was held at Camp Larson, with 40 women participating in this early morning retreat. Dr. Shonda Lohse, AAIP Board Treasurer and Dr. Lisa Dolchok, Tribal Doctor for the Southcentral Foundation of Anchorage, AK, facilitated this year’s Women’s Retreat. The retreat site was very scenic making the women’s retreat a special event this year.

A golf outing was held on Friday morning at the Circling Raven Golf Course that was on the Top 10 New Public-Access Golf Courses in America 2003 list. Fourteen conference participants played the beautiful course and did not worry about their scores. All the participants enjoyed it and prizes were awarded to winning players during the boat cruise.

The Presidential Reception was a highlight of the conference. The event was held in the Golf Pavilion and featured a performance by Award Winning Native Wade Fernandez. Wade Fernandez a widely recognized musician, songwriter and storyteller was the featured entertainer. While Mr. Fernandez performed by using vocals, guitar, Native flute and drumming – the conference attendees enjoyed traditional foods that included elk stew, baron of buffalo and huckleberry tarts. Awards were presented to winners of the poster competition and a presentation from Chairman Chief Allan to Dr. Gerald Ignace, AAIP President and a member of the Coeur d’Alene Tribe.

Saturday, July 26, 2008

The conference opening ceremony began with a presentation of colors by the Coeur d’Alene Warrior Society and an opening prayer. Mr. Cliff SiJohn presented Dr. Ignace with a beautiful eagle wing symbolizing the spirit of tradition and healing that would be present at future AAIP meetings and conferences. Wade Fernandez presented an honor song for Chairman Chief Allan and Cliff SiJohn in recognition and support of Dr. Ignace and the AAIP conference. Welcomes were given by Dr. Gerald Ignace and Chairman Chief Allan to all conference participants to open the conference. This moving and spiritual opening ceremony was followed by an inspirational keynote address by Joe Garcia, President of the National Congress of American Indians and Chairman of the All Indian Pueblo Council. Mr. Garcia both entertained and motivated participants in “Keeping The Roots Strong: Native American Youth in Healing” urging them to educate, unite and raise awareness regarding issues in our communities. Dr. Lawrence Agodoa, Director, Office of Minority Health Research Coordination, NIDDK, presented the “Diabetes Based Science Education in Tribal Schools (DETS)”, an educational program to enhance understanding and appreciation of diabetes and related science in tribal elementary, middle and high schools. Through better understanding of diabetes, Tribal children can be instrumental in preventing the development and better managing diabetes, and reducing its human costs.

The conference-opening luncheon featured the presentation of the AAIP Indian Physician of the Year Award. The honored physician for this year’s conference is Dr. Ted Mala, who is the Director for Tribal Relations and Traditional Healing at the Southcentral Foundation in Anchorage, AK. Dr. Mala gave a very emotional acceptance speech that greatly moved the conference participants. Dr. Mala was thankful for this award as it comes from his peers and fellow AAIP member physicians.

Following the opening lunch, conference participants were transported to the July’amsh Pow Wow Traditional Feast and Grand Entry in Post Falls, Idaho. The Coeur d’Alene Tribe honored AAIP with a place of honor in the Grand Entry. It was a memorable event as AAIP member physicians, Native
medical students and conference participants danced with dancers in various tribal regalia. All of the conference participants appreciated the opportunity to participate in the grand entry and to experience the “Eleventh Annual July’amsh, the Largest Outdoor Pow Wow in the Northwest” – a Coeur d’Alene Tribal Encampment and Pow Wow.

Sunday, July 27, 2008

Sunday began with the annual AAIP Initiation Ceremony to induct new member physicians into the organization. A total of seven new members were initiated in this members’ only ceremony conducted on the beautiful Circling Raven Golf Course at sunrise.

The 30 exhibits opened in the Golf Pavilion to provide valuable information to conference participants. Exhibitors included representatives from various government agencies, universities/colleges, National Native organizations, and tribes. To bring conference participants to view the exhibits, an ice cream social was held during the exhibit hours and was greatly appreciated by the exhibitors.

The plenary sessions began with a presentation by Mr. Vincent Knight, Executive Director, National Justice Resource Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico, regarding “Justice is Healing: The Role of Traditional Peacemaking”, followed by “Linear Versus Relational Worldviews: Where the Line Crosses the Arc of the Circle” presented by Terry L. Cross, Director, National Indian Child Welfare Association of Portland, Oregon.

Richard B. Williams, President & Chief Executive Officer, American Indian College Fund in Denver, CO, presented “The Vision of the Eagle”.

The afternoon was jammed packed with concurrent workshops beginning with “Diabetes Education Through Community Partnerships” presented by Noelle Edwards, AAIP Diabetes Program Director, and Kelli Wilson, Registered Dietitian with the Native Nutrition Consulting Services in Seminole, OK. The “Native Adolescent Health: Challenges and Hopes” by Sara Jumping Eagle, M.D., Adolescent Medicine Specialist and a “Diabetes Prevention – Update” presented by Yvette Roubideaux, M.D., Assistant Professor, College of Medicine, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ. The second round of concurrent workshops was lead by Johanna Clevenger, M.D., Purple Mountain Foundation of Oklahoma City, Beverly Patchell, RN, Assistant Professor, University of Oklahoma, College of Nursing and Lyda Long, M.D., Retired Neurologist, also of Oklahoma City, regarding “The Neuro-psycho-biology of Self Confidence in American Indian Adolescents: Identity Formation in Multicultural America”. “Making the Most Out of the Adolescent Health Care Visit” presented by Amy DeLong, M.D., Family Medicine and Adolescent Health, Ho-Chunk Nation House of Wellness Clinic, Baraboo, WI and the third presentation by Richard Livingston, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Arkansas Children’s Hospital Child Study Center, Little Rock, AR regarding “Jigsaw Puzzles with Missing Pieces: Personality Development and Cultural Fragmentation”.

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The annual Family Night Activity was a Sunset Dinner Cruise on Lake Coeur d’Alene for conference participants and their families. The buffet dinner was the “Absolutely Famous Idaho Burbank Baked Potato Buffet” that included ½ to 1 lb baked potatoes and all the toppings which was enjoyed by everyone. The two-hour boat cruise included spectacular lake views and scenery. A Sweat Ceremony was also held for conference participants who did not attend the boat cruise. Unfortunately, due to a packed conference schedule, these two wonderful events were held concurrently.

Monday, July 28, 2008

The Trail of the Coeur d’Alene in Heyburn Park was the site for the annual Fun Run that began at 6:30 a.m. Youth from the Coeur d’Alene Tribe “Rocking Rez” Program were invited to participate in the Fun Run as a way to network with the AAIP member physicians and Native medical students. Dr. Ignace envisioned this run as an opportunity for AAIP physicians to act as role models for the youth and encourage the youth to seek a health career. Approximately, 60 conference participants and tribal youth competed in the fun run. After the run, everyone was invited to celebrate his or her accomplishments at the Post Run Breakfast. Prizes for all categories were given to Fun Run winners at the Gourd Dance.

An AAIP Diabetes Affiliate Breakfast was held for Regional Member Affiliates, Network Affiliates, and model programs. Updates were given by Noelle Edwards, AAIP Diabetes Program Director and model programs regarding how important the affiliates are in meeting the AAIP Diabetes Program goals of distribution of NDEP materials.

Plenary Sessions began with a presentation by Wilson Compton, M.D., Director, Division of Epidemiology, Services and Prevention, National Institute on Drug Abuse, “Drug Addiction: A Biobehavioral Disorder”, followed by “Disparities in the Health Professions” presented by Clyde B. McCoy, PhD, Director, Comprehensive Drug Research Center, University of Miami, Miami, FL. AAIP member Dr. R. Dale Walker, Director, One Sky Center, Portland, OR, gave a presentation on “The Indian Country Methamphetamine Initiative: A Model of Integrated Community Care”. A luncheon sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics and moderated by Dr. Joseph Bell, provided a speaker Dr. Diana Hu, Chief Clinical Consultant in Pediatrics in Tuba City, AZ regarding Pediatric Obesity.

The highlight of the afternoon plenary session was the panel of youth facilitated by Dr. Theresa Maresca, Director, Native American Center of Excellence, University of Washington, School of Medicine and Paula Groves-Price, PhD of the Coeur d’Alene Leadership Camp in Plummer, ID. The Coeur d’Alene tribal youth participated in an interactive session “Youth Panel: Young Voices, Young Vision: Teens Speak Out on Current Community Issues”. This session covered the expressed personal needs of tribal youth and included a discussion regarding how health care providers and the health system can address their needs.

Concurrent workshops finished the day’s presentations with a workshop “Dance Away Diabetes: A Traditional Approach to the Prevention and Treatment of Diabetes” by Rocco Clark, Sr., Yakama Nation Dance Away Diabetes Instructor. Mr. Clark teaches diabetes prevention through pow wow dancing for the Yakama IHS Healthy Heart and Diabetes Program. The session was very interactive with all participants involved in learning the basic steps to Pow Wow dancing and other complex dance moves. It was very fun and innovative with all the participants enjoying the session. Dr. Joseph Bell, Pembroke Pediatrics Medical Director, “Carolina In
My Mind”, a presentation regarding mental health care in rural North and South Carolina and the innovative programs needed to improve access to mental health service to pediatric patients and the model of integrated care. The final breakout for the day was “Change Improvement in Indian Health: The Chronic Care Initiative” presented by Lyle Ignace, MD, Chief of Internal Medicine and Charlene Avery, MD, Chief of Diabetes & Chronic Care for the Gallup Indian Medical Center regarding the chronic care model to improve Indian health care delivery and concepts that increase clinic efficiency, reduce waste and improve quality of care.

The evening activity was the annual AAIP Gourd Dance with Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Tim Tallchief, Osage, from Oklahoma City, OK. The dance was led by Head Gourd Dancer, Dr. Ray Begay, Navajo, Shepherdsville, KY; Head Lady Dancer, Lana White-King, MD, Alabama/Coushatta and Dakota, Minneapolis, MN; and Head Singer, Kenneth Cozad, Kiowa, of Anadarko, OK.

The Gourd Dance has been a part of AAIP for many years and was established as a means by which AAIP members could participate in a traditional Indian observance but to tie the organization to traditional ways. As a result of efforts by Dr. Everett Rhoades and Dr. Ralph Dru, the AAIP gourd dance obtained permission to have the dance at its annual meetings.

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

The last day of the conference began with plenary sessions and started off with a presentation by Dr. Ted Mala and Lisa Dolchok regarding “An Elder’s Voice and Vision for Harmony and Hope”. Dr. Ignace also invited one of the Coeur d’Alene tribal elders to participate in this session.

The “Triangles of Effective Treatment: Taking a Team Approach to Managing Chronic Disease in American Indian and Alaska Native Youth” by Dr. Philip Smith, Medical Director, Indian Health Service and “Meeting the Health Care Need of Our Communities: A Conference Summary and A Call to Action” presented by H. Sally Smith, Chair, National Indian Health Board. The final plenary “Putting the Pieces Together: From Root Problems to Integrated Care Solutions” moderated by Dr. Melvina McCabe, University of New Mexico School of Medicine and Dr. R. Dale Walker, Director, One Sky Center, Portland, OR, provided a summary of all the conclusions, solutions, recommendations that were given in all the plenary sessions through the conference. A written report will be given at a later date regarding the summary and conclusions. A Closing Lunch was held during which the Presentation of the 2009 AAIP President, Dr. Gerald Hill and a passing of the AAIP Eagle Wing as a symbolic passing of presidential authority. In his acceptance speech, Dr. Hill announced the location of the 2009 Annual meeting to be held in Washington, D.C. Dr. Hill also announced the newly elected Board of Directors for the 2008-2009 year.

The conference evaluations indicated that this was a very successful event to identify causes and solutions to health care system fragmentation – and to increase practitioner’s level of knowledge regarding youth and community care from the community perspective. Dr. Ignace graciously brought AAIP and its members to his home area to experience the beauty of Northern Idaho, the July’amsh Pow Wow and Stick Game Tournament. AAIP is grateful for his invitation. AAIP is also grateful to Chairman Chief Allan for his hospitality and welcoming to all the AAIP members, students and conference participants to again experience the beauty of the land of the Coeur d’Alene Tribe.
The Association of American Indian Physicians and National Tribal Justice Resource Center hosted the Family Wellness Conference on September 29-30, 2008 in downtown Oklahoma City. The conference brought together a diverse group of people that included counselors, health care practitioners, legal professionals, and Native American leaders. The event allowed participants to share concerns, ideas, and solutions to issues that affect Native American families and communities.

“We were able to hear from people with great insight on matters that affect Native Americans, particularly our youth,” said Robert Whitebird III, Director of The Family Wellness and Youth in Distress Program.

“During the conference, we examined our past – discussed our present issues – in order to promote a better future for our young people.”

The common theme among the speakers was promoting family wellness in mind, body, and spirit. Robert Johnston with the Native Wellness Institute got participants to get out of their conference tables and chairs – and interacting with one another. He pointed out that people’s attitudes and approaches to life directly influence a family unit.

“The more positive we are – what we say to ourselves and to each other – can determine how our children view themselves and others,” said Johnston.

Serving as the conference keynote speaker, John Shotton inspired more Native Americans to take on leadership roles. Shotton is the Chairman of the Otoe-Missouria Tribe. He said that family roots help young people thrive – with elders playing a key role in providing wisdom.

“Native Americans have the highest regard for our Elders. We need to continue to do so – and connect them to our youth. We can learn a lot from our Tribal Elders,” explained Chairman Shotton.

The conference also focused attention on drugs, crime, and violence issues affecting Native Ameri-
can youth and families. Vincent Knight, the Executive Director of the National Tribal Justice Resource Center, expressed the need for alternative methods and outlets to dealing with these tough issues. Other speakers agreed.

“Going to court isn’t always the solution,” said the Honorable Barbara Smith. “We must try to hear from all sides of the issue – one way is through a method, we [Chickasaw Nation] call ‘Peacemaking’.”

Smith is a Justice of the Chickasaw Nation. She spoke on the topic of “Peacemaking and the Power of Equity in Tribal Courts”. Justice Smith shared that the Chickasaw Nation has a Peacemaking Court that serves as a forum for resolving conflicts using Chickasaw traditions, customs and culture as the basis for finding peace in the resolution. The core values of the process include respect, humility, compassion, honesty, and spirituality.

“The take away from the conference is that we need to get back to the roots – the foundation – of our Native heritage and customs. We have a lot of wisdom there to strengthen our families. And – by doing so, we help our children grow to be healthy individuals in mind, body, and spirit,” said Whitebird.

Family Wellness and Youth in Distress

Funded by the Administration for Native Americans, the Family Wellness and Youth in Distress program is charged with developing a culturally relevant curriculum that focuses on reducing youth violence and strengthening the family unit.

“We were able to hear from people with great insight on matters that affect Native Americans, particularly our youth,”

Robert Whitebird III, Director of The Family Wellness and Youth in Distress Program.
The Association of American Indian Physicians organized the annual Patty Iron Cloud National Native American Youth Initiative (NNAYI) held June 21-29, 2008 in Washington, D.C. Sixty-five high school students selected from across the country participated in the 11th annual summer program that exposes the participants to careers in health care and biomedical research.

“It was a great experience for me and the other students,” explained 17-year-old Zech Harjo from Norman, OK. “We toured health organizations and got to talk with health care professionals. They shared with us what it takes to go through medical school. This opportunity has really made me want to go after my dream of being an optometrist.”

The NNAYI is a unique weeklong opportunity. They get to explore a variety of educational and health care institutions, including George Washington University, Georgetown, the National Library of Medicine, the Office of Minority Health, and Indian Health Service. The curriculum is interactive with lectures and seminars that involve Native health professionals and counselors who spend the entire week with the students.

“This is an intense academic program for the students. We really want them to be exposed to the people who practice medicine. These health care...
professionals serve as role models for the students – so that they know it is possible for them to continue their education and pursue a career in medicine," said Lucinda Myers, NNAYI Program Director. AAIP Physician Board Members were part of a panel that discussed their journeys and experiences to becoming an American Indian health care professional. Students also heard from physicians in a wide range of specialties – cardiology, pediatrics, emergency medicine, veterinary medicine, and even herbal medicine.

“I want to thank the entire NNAYI team for designing the exciting Washington, D.C. Summer Program which introduced me and other Native students to health profession opportunities," said Harmony Stearns, an NNAYI participant from Linden, VA. “For me, the NNAYI Summer Program changed my life... because of the program’s presentations, I am determined to be a pediatrician.”

More than 500 Native high school students have experienced the program over the past decade. The initiative is administered through a cooperative agreement with the Office of Minority Health and the Association of American Indian Physicians.

Patty Iron Cloud
NNAYI Program Goals

1. To increase awareness of the various health professions and biomedical research options among AI/AN students

2. To increase awareness of the personal and academic skills required for admission to colleges/universities/health profession schools

3. To increase awareness of Indian health issues among AI/AN students

4. To increase student access to AI/AN role models in health careers

“This opportunity has really made me want to go after my dream of being an optometrist.”
Zech Harjo - Norman, OK
UPCOMING EVENTS

AAIP/NIHB Diabetes Walk
November 12 - Washington, D.C.

Marshall Foundation Scholarship Deadline
November 21, 2008 - More information at www.aaip.org

AAIP Annual Holiday Open House
Date to be announced - Oklahoma City, OK

Pre-Admission Workshop
Date/Location to be announced

AAIP 38th Annual Meeting and National Health Conference
Dates to be announced - Washington, D.C.

Association of American Indian Physicians
1225 Sovereign Row, Suite 103
Oklahoma City, OK 73108

www.aaip.org
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED