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THE AAIP

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN INDIAN PHYSICIANS NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2008

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Welcome to the Winter Edition of the AAIP Newsletter. As we welcome a new year, we are reminded of our mission at the Association of American Indian Physicians. Our primary goal in 2008 is to pursue excellence in Native American healthcare by promoting education in the medical disciplines, honoring traditional healing principles and restoring the balance of mind, body, and spirit.

AAIP fosters programs that encourage Native American youth to explore health careers. In this newsletter, you will learn more about the Patty Iron Cloud National Native American Youth Initiative and the impact the program has made in the lives of Native students over the past decade. A formal review of surveys serves as an indicator of how effective mentoring, role models, and education play in motivating students to seek future studies in the medical profession.

We look forward to a successful year with the various AAIP Programs such as the Indian Country Methamphetamine Initiative, the Healthier Indian Country Initiative, the Family Wellness and Youth In Distress Phase II Project, and Careers In Health for Native Students Program. I want to recognize the tribes and Native organizations that partner with us including the National Congress of American Indians, United South and Eastern Tribes, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, the Navajo Nation, Choctaw Nation, Winnebago, and Crow Nation.

While we focus on our mission in 2008, we must also pause and remember some very special people who have passed on. We dedicate some time in this newsletter in memoriam. We remember three physicians who have made a mark in Native communities, the medical profession and as members of our organization. They lived to help and heal patients. In their passing, they leave a legacy.

The AAIP staff is planning for several upcoming events, including the Annual Meeting in Worley, Idaho. Expect exciting and educational programs slated for July 24 – 29. It has been several years since we've held the event on a reservation or tribal facility. We are honored to be going to the Coeur D'Alene Reservation. They have been so welcoming and helpful in the planning of our conference that we want everyone to experience their hospitality, beauty and warmth. Please save the date – we hope to see all of you there!

Best Regards,

Margaret Knight
AAIP Executive Director





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Pictured here are a few images from the AAIP Open House.



NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAM IMPACTS MANY YOUTHS

Survey shows initiative is effective in promoting health careers

Students are selected nationwide to attend the program held in Washington, D.C. Scholarships help participants pay for travel expenses, lodging, and most meals during the youth initiative. American Indian/Alaska Native high school students ages 16 – 18 with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 are eligible to apply for the program. In 2007, fifty-one students attended the program.

Survey results from the Patty Iron Cloud Native American Youth Initiative program have been evaluated. The results show the enormous impact that the program has had over the years in educating and encouraging Native students to pursue healthcare professions.

“The impact is phenomenal in that this is a one-time program for each of the students,” said Lucinda Myers, NNAYI Program Director. “The youth initiative is not a summer camp, rather a nine-day intense academic enrichment program. The students are exposed to medical programs, Native American role models, lectures and tours.”

“The mentorship aspect of NNAYI gave me the confidence that if I worked hard, I was capable of doctoral level schoolwork.”

MSII at Georgetown University,
1999 NNAYI Student

A total of 465 AI/AN high school students and 71 AI/AN counselors participated in the NNAYI program from 1998 – 2006. In February of 2007, a questionnaire survey was conducted of former students and counselors with a 31% response rate.

The purpose of the survey was to determine the effectiveness of the NNAYI program in encouraging and motivating AI/AN youth to pursue a higher education and a career in health care. The following illustrates the impact of the program:

NNAYI SURVEY RESULTS

Encouragement/motivation to pursue college or professional school:

88% of students reported that the NNAYI motivated them to pursue college or professional school. The others surveyed stated they were already motivated prior to the program.

96% of students who completed high school at the time of the survey pursued higher education.

43 of the 65 respondents who specified a current field of study (66%) reported majors clearly related to the medical/health profession, including biology, speech language pathology, public health, medicine, and pharmacy.

100% of counselors had either completed higher education or were presently enrolled in a college/graduate program. Of the degree specified, 95% were in the health/medical profession.

Applications for both students and counselors are now available for the 2008 NNAYI program. The application deadline for counselors is March 21, 2008. The Association of American Indian Physicians will select 12 counselors, age 21 and older, to attend the program. Counselors will serve as role models and chaperones.

The student application packet is due April 18, 2008. For more information on the program and application process, visit www.aaip.org or call (405) 946-7072.



Encouragement/motivation to pursue a career in a health profession or biomedical research:

81% of students reported that the NNAYI motivated them to pursue a career in a health profession or biomedical research.

15% of students reported that they were presently working in a health profession. Most students are still pursuing a higher education at the time of the survey.

52% of counselors reported that their present job was in a health profession or in biomedical research.

The results suggest that the NNAYI program succeeded in motivating participants to pursue higher education. Of the 83 who had completed high school at the time of the survey, 80 (90%) continued their education. At least two-thirds pursued college majors closely related to health/medicine. The vast majority of participants also reported that the NNAYI inspired them to pursue a career in a health profession or biomedical research area.

AAIP AND SUPPORTERS LACE UP FOR DIABETES WALK

Oklahoma City event promotes education and awareness



The Association of American Indian Physicians organized its first annual Diabetes Walk to promote awareness on Friday, November 30, 2007 at the new River Trails in Oklahoma City. About 30 people participated in the walk to support efforts to educate the public about diabetes.

“We walked in honor of those who are struggling with the complications of the disease,” explained Noelle Edwards, MPH, AAIP Diabetes Program Director. “Our goal was to mobilize the Native American community to join together and fight this epidemic.”

Organizers say the best way to fight the disease is through prevention – living a healthier lifestyle, exercising, and eating a balanced diet. Participants in the event took part in a brisk 30 minute walk. They were served a healthy snack of fresh fruits and vegetables.

“Some people were surprised by how good they felt after some physical activity and nutritious food. And – that’s the bottom line, we want everyone to know

that it does feel good to make healthy choices,” said Edwards.

One in four Americans suffers from diabetes or is at risk for developing Type-2 diabetes. The diabetes rate in the U.S. has increased by about 15 percent in the last decade. In the American Indian/Alaska Native community, the rate has increased by 50 percent. Type-2 adult onset diabetes also affects children.

Organizers were inspired to host the event after learning about efforts from a partner organization, the Sioux Tribe in Rosebud, SD. The tribe was determined to get the Native community to participate nationwide.

“Prevention is our biggest ally. No one has to develop Type-2 diabetes,” said Edwards.

Those participating in the walk included the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic, OU Diabetes Center, Lawton Indian Hospital, Wichita and Affiliated Tribes of Anadarko, and the Oklahoma Native American AIDS Coalition.

CONGRATULATIONS

Drawings were held for two new pairs of Nike Air Native Shoes. Prize winners were LAURA CHOATE member of AAIP’s HIV Prevention Coalition and CARMIE HAMILTON diabetes educator with the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic.

“Prevention is our biggest ally.

No one has to develop Type-2 diabetes;”

Noelle Edwards, MPH, AAIP Diabetes Program Director

IN MEMORIAM

We pause to remember the following AAIP members who passed away in 2007. They dedicated their lives to making a difference in Native American communities and to their profession as physicians.

TAYLOR MCKENZIE

Taylor McKenzie is the first Navajo to become a medical doctor and surgeon, serving a distinguished 30-year career with the Public Health Service on the Navajo Nation. Dr. McKenzie was the tribe's Vice-President from 1999-2003. In December 2005, he was appointed the first Navajo Nation Medical Officer.

LIONEL DEMONTIGNY

Lionel Demontigny is the first American Indian (Chippewa) appointed as Assistant Surgeon General in the United States. Dr. DeMontigny designed some of the first medical care delivery systems that combine Western and Traditional Indian health practices. He was also instrumental in developing programs to prepare Native students for medical school. One of the programs, Indians in Medicine (In-Med), was established at the University of North Dakota.

BLAKE LAWRENCE

BLAKE LAWRENCE served his patients, his people, and his country. Dr. Lawrence was an officer in the United States Air Force for 15 years, attaining the rank of Captain. He went on to pursue his Medical Degree from the University of Washington. He returned to his home state of Arizona and practiced family medicine, serving the Native American people on the Hopi, Navajo, and Colorado River reservations.

CROSS CULTURAL MEDICINE WORKSHOP April 24-27

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Join AAIP for the Cross Cultural Medicine Workshop held April 24-27 in Santa Fe, NM. Learn about current health issues affecting Indian communities in both reservation and urban settings. Compare and contrast methods in Western and Traditional Medicine. Participants will also gain information to improve communications between Native patients and health professionals.

AAIP is hosting the workshop at the Hotel Santa Fe. Registration is \$350. In addition to full access to conference sessions, the registration fee entitles you to a number of added events and activities including those listed on this page.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Special rates have been arranged at the conference hotel -- \$112 for single and \$132 for double plus tax. Because of the limited number of rooms secured for the conference, please register and book early **1-800-825-9876**.

HOTEL SANTA FE
1501 PASEO DE PERALTA
SANTA FE, NM 87501
1-800-825-9876

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS
offered for Medical and Pre-Med Students

Application deadline – APRIL 1, 2008
www.aaip.org or (405) 946-7072

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2008

Travel Day
6 p.m. Reception

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2008

9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Traditional Medicine and Healer Speakers
12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Traditional Medicine and Healer Speakers

Gathering of Nations Pow Wow Evening Activity

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2008

9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Traditional Medicine and Healer Speakers
12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Traditional Medicine and Healer Speakers
3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Wrap-up
6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Closing Dinner

SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2008

Travel day

Go to www.aaip.org for more info and to access the registration form.



NEW MEMBER

SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Zach Anderson

Dr. Zach Anderson remembers the pain his grandfather experienced decades ago. He was just eight years old when his grandfather suffered third degree burns over half his body. Dr. Anderson recalls seeing first hand the compassion and care needed to help his grandfather heal.

"The doctors and nurses really inspired me," explained Dr. Anderson. "I knew that I wanted to be in a profession that allowed me to take care of people."

Dr. Anderson – a member of the Creek tribe – also had a desire to improve healthcare for Native Americans. He earned his undergraduate degree in Biomedical Sciences from Montana State University. He went on to the University of North Dakota School of Medicine – with his residency

performed at the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Anderson would soon return to his roots to serve Native communities.

"I wanted to make sure that Native communities have access to care – know that it's available and get the help they need," he said.

Dr. Anderson served as the Chief Medical Officer for the Creek Nation in Oklahoma. While he enjoyed the administrative role, he missed practicing medicine. In February 2008, Dr. Anderson joined the Stigler Community Health and Wellness Clinic where he is practicing family medicine.

"There I get to do what I've always wanted to do – see patients and care for them," said Dr. Anderson. "It's my passion as a physician."

As a new member of the Association of American Indian Physicians, Dr. Anderson hopes to encourage young Native Americans to pursue a career in health care. He hopes to mirror what the doctors and nurses did decades ago when he was a child – inspire him to help others heal. Today, he is not only a Native American role model, he's also the proud father of five children. Dr. Anderson and his family reside in Morris, Oklahoma.



"...I wanted to be
in a profession that allowed me
to take care of people."

AAIP

SECURES FUNDING TO STRENGTHEN NATIVE FAMILIES

Goal set to incorporate traditional practices to programs



The Association of American Indian Physicians has successfully secured funding for the second phase of the Family Wellness and Youth In Distress program. The second phase of this program is critical to the full success of the initiative. This stage addresses the family unit, rather than just focusing on the youth. To meet the third objective of the program, AAIP will work closely with the National American Indian Court Judges Association.

The Administration for Native Americans (ANA) awards funding for the initiative. The goal of the program is to reduce Native American youth violence with the second phase expanding the focus on the Native American family unit.

The program relies on its Native American Coalition to help develop ideas. The coalition has grown to more than 60 members. The program also utilizes a curriculum to help meet the following objectives:

- To create a new family-based approach to the Youth Violence and Prevention Curriculum
- To work with tribal and community leaders, elders, and project partners to develop family enrichment programs within Native communities
- To partner with the National American Indian Court Judges Association to develop a tribal court model of support

“We’re working with tribal elders to help us incorporate more traditional or tribal practices into curriculum, activities, and the tribal court model,” said Whitebird.

To learn more about the Family Wellness and Youth in Distress Program, visit www.aaip.org. You may also contact Robert Whitebird III, Program Director, at rwhitebird@aaip.org or (405) 946-7072.





INITIATIVE SEEKS TO FIGHT METH IN INDIAN COUNTRY

AAIP and Tribal Organizations Partner in Effort

Native American tribes are reporting that methamphetamine abuse is one of the most critical problems impacting their communities. The Association of American Indian Physicians is taking a lead role in a comprehensive effort to tackle the issue. AAIP along with several tribal organizations across the country are part of the Indian Country Methamphetamine Initiative (ICMI).

The ICMI is a nationwide project to create awareness, education, and informational campaigns based upon existing promising practices found in selected American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

“The program is truly an organizational collaboration. It is designed to bring together federal, tribal, and local resources,” said Rachel Crawford, AAIP Program Director.

Since September 2006, the project partners have been working to develop a national education and information outreach campaign that targets Native American communities. As the project lead, AAIP meets with the partners on a monthly basis. All of the partners participate in at least one conference call a month to share ideas and provide a progress report.

“As a team we are working to develop a culturally specific methamphetamine abuse education kit. The kit will be implemented in communities to educate people on the devastating affects of meth use,” said Crawford. “The factors involved with methamphetamine abuse are far-reaching – Indian Country has been hit harder than almost any other ethnic group.”

The project involves four American Indian organizations and four federally recognized tribes – Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, United South and Eastern Tribes, One Sky Center, National Congress of American Indians, Winnebago Tribe, Navajo Nation, Choctaw Nation, and Crow Tribe.

The methamphetamine issue is complex, but the organizations involved in this effort believe they can make a difference in creating a program that addresses prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery strategies, and greater protection for local communities.

SAVE THE DATE

- APRIL 24-27 Cross Cultural Medicine Workshop – Santa Fe, NM
- JUNE 21-29 Patty Iron Cloud NNAYI Conference – Washington, D.C.
- JULY 24-29 AAIP Annual Meeting – Worley, ID
- TBA Diabetes Today Training - Tucson, AZ
- TBA Pre-Admission Workshop

UPCOMING AAIP EVENTS

Association of American Indian Physicians

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