

# JOHN T. WOLFE AWARD

## J. CALEB SHAHBANDEH, MPH, MSIII



J. Caleb Shahbandeh is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and a third-year medical student at the University of Oklahoma's School of Community Medicine in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Along with his tight knit family and community medicine, Caleb is passionate about native health issues, which includes supporting and increasing the number of natives pursuing the health professions on a national level. For many years, he has been an active and committed board member of ANAMS; and he credits his involvement with AAIP's student programming as one of the great motivating factors in his continued commitment toward becoming part of the relatively small group of Native American physicians in this country.

Before entering medical school, Caleb earned undergraduate degrees in both Chemistry/Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences, as well as a Master's degree in Public Health (MPH)

from the University of Oklahoma. Throughout his MPH training, he worked to gain an understanding of the health status of natives; he examined the historical relationship between tribes and the federal government; and he developed a drive to meaningfully contribute to improving existing health disparities. Furthermore, as a Health Educator in the Department of Research and Population Health of his tribe, Caleb's background has come to include: establishing a sustainable and tribal-specific substance abuse prevention program; research on Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) accreditation; and numerous publications and presentations given at conferences across the country.

Witness to the consequences of poor health outcomes in his own family and community, Caleb has focused on becoming a leader that can fully recognize and bring attention to the health care and medical education needs of Native Americans in a way that respects native culture, heritage, and sovereignty. Furthermore, he believes in the value of prevention and population health, and has fostered a view of health that is not purely based in physics and biochemistry alone. He recognizes and appreciates the emotional, spiritual, mental and social aspects of health as well. He is a George Keiser Family Foundation Scholar, an avid runner, a classical pianist, and he loves to travel and spend time with his family and friends. Further, as a new third year med student starting his rotations, his medical specialty interests range from general surgery to psychiatry with many others in between. Caleb's role models are his hard-working parents, Michele and Norik Shahbandeh; and his sister Lilia and brother Jon are his main support system along with a large Chickasaw, Choctaw and Armenian extended family.