



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 26, 2024

Health, Education, and Human Services Committee offers support for the Center for Native American Health's grant proposal



PHOTO: Left to right: Delegate Vince R. James, Delegate George H. Tolth, and Delegate Curtis Yanito

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. - The Center for Native American Health (CNAH) at the University of New Mexico (UNM) received unanimous support from the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee during its regular meeting on Monday, for its proposed grant application aimed to improve healthcare workforce development in Native American communities.

The grant, if awarded, will provide crucial funding over five years to expand pipeline programs for Native American students, from elementary through community college levels, ultimately addressing the critical shortage of healthcare professionals in tribal communities.

“This grant will provide advancement among indigenous communities by empowering future generations of healthcare professionals,” said Delegate Dr. Andy Nez.

Norman Cooyate, Associate Director for the Center for Native American Health, expressed gratitude for the overwhelming support received from the committee. “This grant represents a significant opportunity to make a significant difference in addressing health disparities and advancing health equity in Native American communities across New Mexico and Arizona,” said Cooyate.

The proposed grant seeks to increase the number of Native American students pursuing careers in healthcare, with a focus on fields such as nursing, medicine, and pharmacy. Dr. Charity Bishop, practitioner in family medicine and a key collaborator with CNAH, emphasized the urgent need for healthcare professionals who reflect the diverse communities they serve. "By investing in pipeline programs and providing support from elementary school to college, we can empower Native American students to pursue careers in healthcare.", said Bishop.

One of the key components of the grant proposal is the establishment of a program advisory board comprising of representatives from various tribes and communities. This board will play a crucial role in guiding the implementation of summer preparatory enrichment programs, tutoring initiatives, and counseling support services for students enrolled in Health Science Career Programs at UNM.

In order to secure the funding for this initiative, CNAH was tasked with garnering support from the communities and tribes it aims to serve. The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, recognizing the importance of this endeavor, voted unanimously in favor of endorsing the grant proposal through a letter of support, with four members voting in favor and zero opposed.

Delegate Andy Nez, drawing from his extensive experience in supporting community initiatives, recommended the inclusion of data and statistics to strengthen the letter of support. This addition provides valuable insight into the current enrollment of Native American students in health professions degree programs at UNM, highlighting the immediate need for increased support and resources.

The Center for Native American Health extends its sincere appreciation to the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee for their unwavering support and commitment to advancing the health and well-being of Native American communities. With the committee's endorsement secured, CNAH looks forward to submitting its grant application to the Indian Health Service (IHS) and working collaboratively with tribal partners to create a brighter, healthier future for all.

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