

Building, Filling and Proving the Nursing Pipeline

Next Steps HPOG Project: Year 2

Efforts to Increase American
Indian Involvement in North Dakota
Healthcare Careers

NDSU

NURSING



CANKDESKA CIKANA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Spirit Lake Dakota Nation





Continuing the Momentum

Sustaining Career Pathways for American Indian Health Professionals in North Dakota Project

From October 2012 to September 2013, the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Department of Nursing and Cankdeska Cikana Community College (CCCC) underwent the second year of a four-year grant through the University Partnership Research Grants for Health Professional Opportunity Grants (HPOG). This effort was launched to identify the disparity of American Indians in healthcare careers throughout North Dakota and initiate the “Sustaining Career Pathways for American Indian Health Professionals in North Dakota: Building Apprenticeship and Workforce Options with the Next Steps HPOG Project.”

During this period, the NDSU Department of Nursing and CCCC continued the momentum established in year one and persisted in accomplishing the three original program objectives:

Objective I: *Engage state nursing educators and employers in an annual conference focusing on nursing education and employment for American Indian students.*

Objective II: *Encourage interest in healthcare careers through mentoring courses and programs for American Indian students.*

Objective III: *Create employment through a healthcare apprenticeship/residency program for participants of the Next Steps project.*

The following information outlines the activities carried out during the second year, designed to further address the underrepresentation of American Indians in North Dakota healthcare careers.

Past, Present, and Future of American Indian Nursing in North Dakota Conference

As part of the program’s first stated objective, a second annual conference was held on June 11-12, 2013, at Spirit Lake Casino and Resort in Fort Totten to develop strategies for the recruitment and retention of American Indian students into the nursing profession. Continuing on the previous year’s success, the theme for the 2013 conference was “Past, Present, and Future of American Indian Nursing in North Dakota.”

The two-day event, facilitated by Leander McDonald, PhD, Vice President of Academic Affairs at CCCC, featured keynote speakers Dr. Sandy Grande, professor and chair in the education department of Connecticut College and faculty fellow in the Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy, as well as Dr. Cynthia Lindquist, president of CCCC. In addition to the keynote addresses, the conference aimed to achieve seven objectives through panel discussions, focus groups, premiering a draft of the nursing recruitment and retention of American Indians video, facility tours and other activities.

Day 1 Objectives:

- *Explore the historical context of American Indian nurses enrolled in nursing programs*
- *Develop an understanding of American Indian students..*
- *Review effective implementation strategies for integrating and enhancing diversity in nursing education and practice.*
- *Facilitate networking opportunities for American Indian students, nurse educators and employers.*
- *Participate in small group discussion on nursing education.*

Day 2 Objectives:

- *Develop an understanding of American Indian students.*
- *Describe American Indian nursing opportunities and challenges in the changing healthcare industry.*
- *Discuss indigenous theory and pedagogy in the classroom.*

62 participants attended day one of the conference, and 61 attended day two, resulting in an increase in attendance from the first annual conference. All objectives were successfully achieved, according to attendee evaluations. The average objective scores for day one were 4.48, based on a 5-point Likert scale, and the average objective scores for day two were 4.52. Additionally, all presenters were given high ratings for teaching effectiveness and expertise.

The attendees found the most enlightening conference material to be the stories and experiences that were shared by the various presenters. In addition to this feedback, participants offered suggestions for future conference topics and locations, and these recommendations will be used to make future conferences even more meaningful.

Recruitment and Retention of American Indians Into Nursing Video

One of the new initiatives for year two of the HPOG grant was to develop a video on the recruitment and retention of American Indians into nursing careers. A draft of this video was shown for the first time during the “Past, Present, and Future of American Indian Nursing in North Dakota” conference. The video tells the story of many American Indian nurses and student nurses who overcame obstacles to pursue and achieve healthcare careers and nursing school. It provides encouragement for others faced with similar challenges.

After the presentation, viewers were given evaluations to rate the video draft and offer suggestions for improvement. Overall, feedback was very positive. 43 participants completed evaluations and, on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), everyone rated the video between 7 and 10, with an average rating of 9.3. The suggestions received from the open-ended questions will be considered when the video is finalized. After completion, the video will be used to reach multiple audiences, including American Indians, educational institutions and healthcare employers.



Building the Pipeline

Driving Interest in Healthcare Careers and Increasing Access to Nursing Education

The second main objective of the program is to encourage healthcare careers for American Indian students. The first logical step to this end is to provide better resources and support for American Indian youth. Prior to the HPOG grant, some programs existed in North Dakota to increase the overall awareness of healthcare careers among the American Indian population, but no ongoing efforts had been specifically geared toward the youth. As a result, the HPOG program initiated a series of ongoing educational opportunities to target this group.

Health Careers 4 U (HC4U) Summer Program

CCCC, in partnership with NDSU nursing professionals and medical students, residents and faculty from both the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, held its 2013 “Health Careers 4 U,” or HC4U, summer program for 11- to 14-year-olds on July 22-25, 2014. The four-day curriculum focused on such subjects as health careers, nutrition and physical activity. Program leaders actively engaged the youth with simulations, games and role-playing scenarios.

This was a continuation of year one efforts, with 21 children attending the 2013 program. Many participants claimed to have found HC4U very interesting and gave it high rankings. Furthermore, most stated they were likely to return and would recommend the program to others.

Quarterly HC4U Academies were planned as follow-up to the youth who attended the summer program. These one-day academies were held on Sundays, encouraging the youth to continue exploring and discovering health professions.

Photovoice Project

American Indian youths are disproportionately affected by the highest obesity rates when compared with other ethnic groups in the U.S. According to the published work, “Childhood Obesity in American Indians,” by Dennis M. Styne, M.D., 40 to 50 percent of American Indian children are considered overweight or obese by the time they reach 10 years of age. Therefore, CCCC and NDSU Department of Nursing initiated the Photovoice project to creatively examine youth views of healthy environmental factors, while furthering the effort to increase healthcare career recruitment.

Through the Photovoice project, cameras were given to 25 American Indian children, ages 11 to 14. The children were asked to take photographs that exemplified the topic of healthy or unhealthy environments. Then, they were asked to return to a focus group one month later to discuss each child’s five favorite photos.

The participants provided an interesting perspective on healthy lifestyles of American Indian youth. Generally, the children seemed to have a broad knowledge of what is healthy, but making personal health choices proved to be difficult for many of them. Although there were not enough participants to draw formal conclusions, environmental factors seem to be key to positively impacting health choices. The anecdotal results from year two will provide a solid base for continuing the Photovoice project, which will apply new strategies to increase participation.

Introduction to Community & Public Health Course

In July 2012 CCCC, The Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University and Department of Nursing at North Dakota State University offered a college-level course called “Introduction to Community & Public Health.” This three-week course was offered again in July 2013 to further address public health issues of importance to the nation, state and Spirit Lake Tribe population. Additionally, the curriculum focused on a variety of health careers and how these professionals address public health issues in the community.

Nine of the students enrolled in the Introduction to Community & Public Health class completed pre and post surveys used to evaluate class objectives. Results showed that students were more likely to pursue healthcare careers after taking the class. Additionally, 50 percent more students believed they could make a difference improving the health of their communities at course completion, compared with their beliefs on the pre survey, suggesting a positive effect of the course.



Filling the Pipeline

Recruiting/Retaining American Indian Students Into Healthcare Programs

A simultaneous effort with driving better understanding and consideration of healthcare careers is to actively recruit those interested into appropriate programs. Furthermore, given the challenges of such programs, an additional, yet equally important, effort is to provide support to help retain students in these programs until completion.

2012 Nursing Program Survey Results

In 2012, a nursing program survey was developed to assess the characteristics of nursing programs in North Dakota and identify the trends of American Indian student enrollment. Surveys were distributed to all nursing program directors from the 10 institutions in North Dakota that offer practical nurse degrees and the 14 institutions that offer registered nurse degrees. Results became available in 2013.

The survey results were diverse, with some tribal colleges reporting enrollment almost completely consisting of American Indians, while other institutions reported very few. The 10 survey respondents had a total of 1,024 nursing students currently enrolled in their nursing programs. 81, or nearly 8 percent, of the students were American Indians, and the number of American Indian students who graduated in the past five years ranged from 0 to 42 with a median of 7.5 (4 institutions did not report). The survey also identified the programs' strategies and challenges for recruiting and retaining American Indian students.

Data from the survey will continue to be analyzed, and the results will be used to adapt programs to fit the needs of these institutions. Future surveys may also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the HPOG Next Steps program.

Next Steps Project

The Next Steps project uses a mentoring/career pathway model to help low-income American Indians go to school for careers in healthcare. It essentially acts as a career ladder into health professions in tribal communities. Those interested in such careers can receive a wide range of educational support services through Next Steps. This includes full tuition, mentoring services, childcare assistance and other forms of support.

To be eligible for the Next Steps project, participants must meet the following criteria:

- *Interested in learning to provide care for elders and people with disabilities*
- *Interested in becoming a QSP or CNA in nursing homes or in community settings*
- *Potentially interested in having a career as a health professional in the future*
- *Willing to work closely with a mentor to finish and maintain training goals*
- *Completed drug screening and background check*
- *Financial need (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF] recipient or low income)*
- *Enrolled in a Federally Recognized Tribe*
- *Available for three full weeks of training*

Healthcare career education opportunities available through Next Steps include quality service provider (QSP), certified nursing assistant (CNA), certified medical assistant (CMA), licensed practical nurse (LPN), registered nurse (RN), licensed registered dietician (LRD), licensed social worker (LSW) and other related health professions.

Recruitment/Retention of American Indians into Nursing (RAIN) Program

In collaboration with the Next Steps grant, RAIN is a program run by partner University of North Dakota (UND) that offers further assistance to those pursuing nursing specific degrees. Support offered by RAIN includes mentoring and academic advisement, tutoring, scholarship and financial aid advisement and other student services.

Results from the RAIN program have been very encouraging. Since the 1990s, more than 150 RAIN program participants have earned nursing degrees. Also, of the American Indian registered nurses in North Dakota, roughly 80 percent are RAIN program graduates.





Proving the Pipeline

Securing Employment for Healthcare Program Graduates

The overall efforts to attract American Indians into healthcare oriented careers and pursue their degrees is all for naught if the final connection to appropriate employment is not made. Therefore, the third main objective of the Sustaining Career Pathways Project is to create employment opportunities through a healthcare apprenticeship/residency program for participants in the Next Steps program.

Establishing Healthcare Career Advancement Programs (H-CAPs)

Healthcare Career Advancement Programs (H-CAPs) are currently being established in North Dakota rural areas near or in reservation communities to develop an apprenticeship/residency program for graduate nurses. Next Steps, in conjunction with the NDSU Department of Nursing, is working to secure employment sites interested in employing Next Steps graduates and participating in the apprenticeship/residency program. Once the program is fully implemented, data will be collected to measure the impact of the H-CAPs, based on the successful attainment of professional licensure and employment among American Indian nursing students.

2012 Healthcare Facility Survey Results

In 2012, as part of the first year of grant activities, approximately 200 healthcare facility administrators and directors of nursing in North Dakota were invited to participate in a survey to gain a better understanding of their employee recruitment needs. Results were compiled in year two from the 77 respondents, who represented 26 hospitals and 51 long-term care facilities.

Findings from the survey included the number of weeks it takes for both hospitals and long-term care facilities to fill job openings for licensed practical nurse (LPN) and registered nurse (RN) positions, as well as average starting salaries. Interestingly, some respondents reported a cost of more than \$60,000 to replace an RN at their facilities. The survey also identified the top three reasons why most nurses choose to continue working at a facility: location, pay and atmosphere.

Results continue to be analyzed, and they will help determine participants' interests in developing Apprenticeship for Health Care (AHCP) programs and in recruiting HPOG Next Steps program participants as future employees.

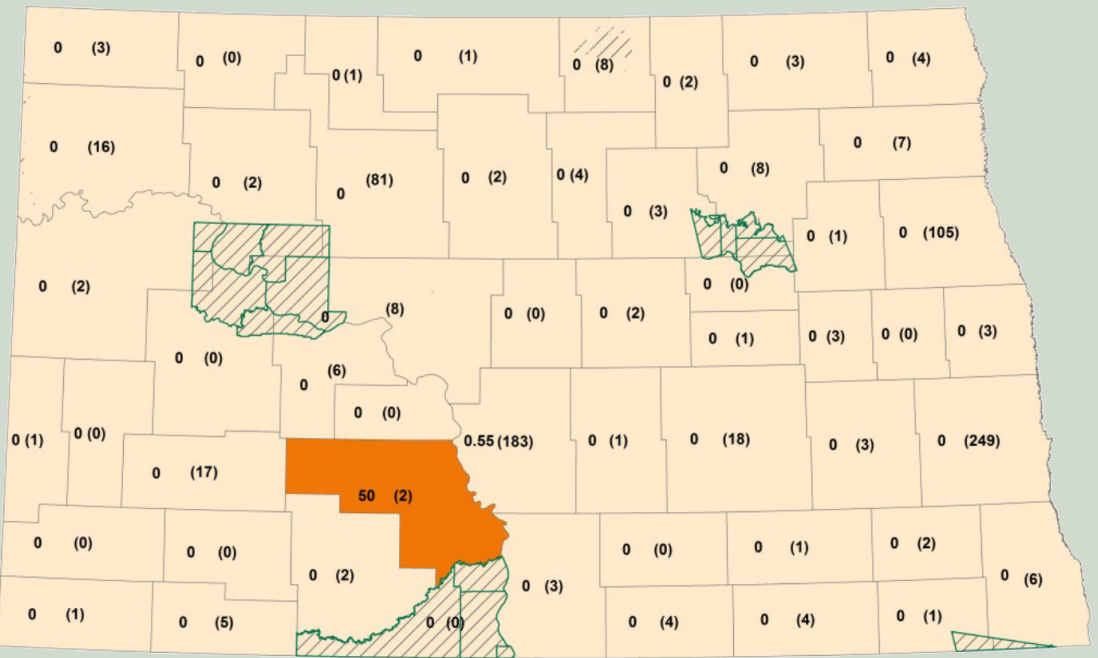
Continued North Dakota Nursing Demographic Studies

During the first year of the HPOG grant, NDSU Department of Nursing and North Dakota Center for Nursing conducted a study that identified an underrepresentation of American Indian nurses in North Dakota. The same study was conducted again in the second year, and will be repeated in years three and four to continue to identify trends, determine areas of the state with the most need for assistance, and measure the impact of the programs put in place to address the issue.

The maps generated by this study highlight each of the 53 individual counties in the state and identify the total number of nurses per county, compared with the total number of American Indian nurses for the same area. Further maps were generated to show the percentage of American Indian nurses compared with overall county American Indian population, and then a step further to identify American Indian nurses by nursing specialty.

Percentage of Employed APRNs Who Are American Indian as Compared to Total Number of Employed ND APRNs in Each County

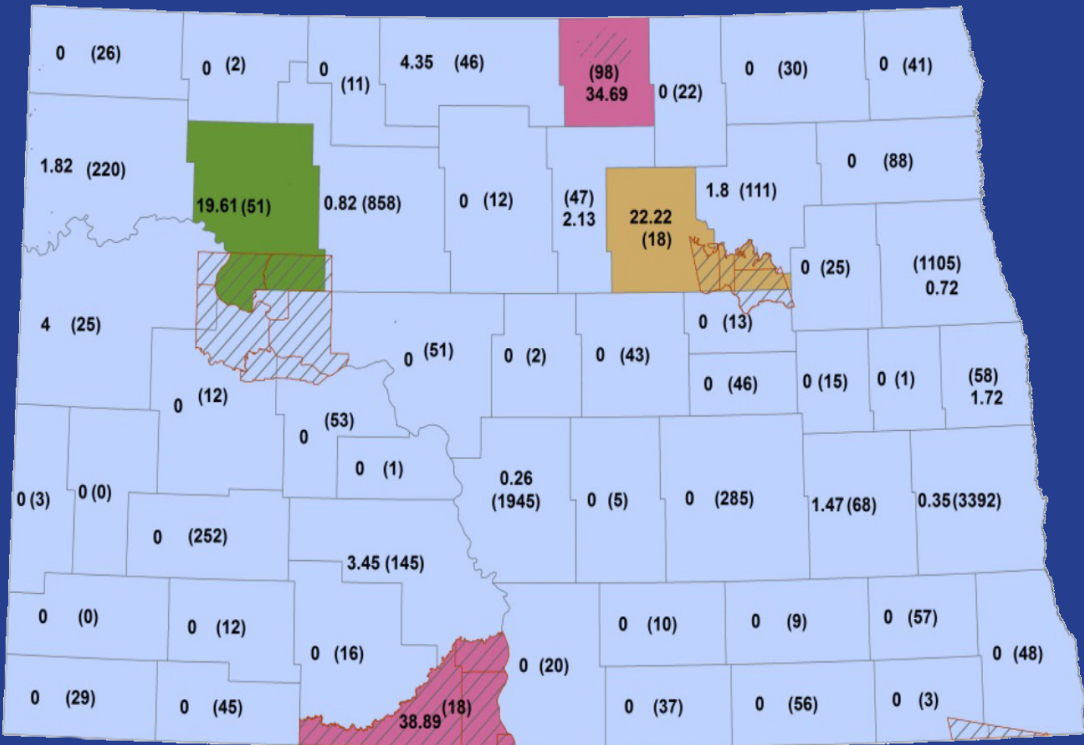
Total APRNs = 779 American Indian APRNs = 2



* Number in parentheses indicates the total number of employed ND APRNs in the county

Percentage of Employed RNs Who Are American Indian as Compared to Total Number of Employed ND RNs in Each County

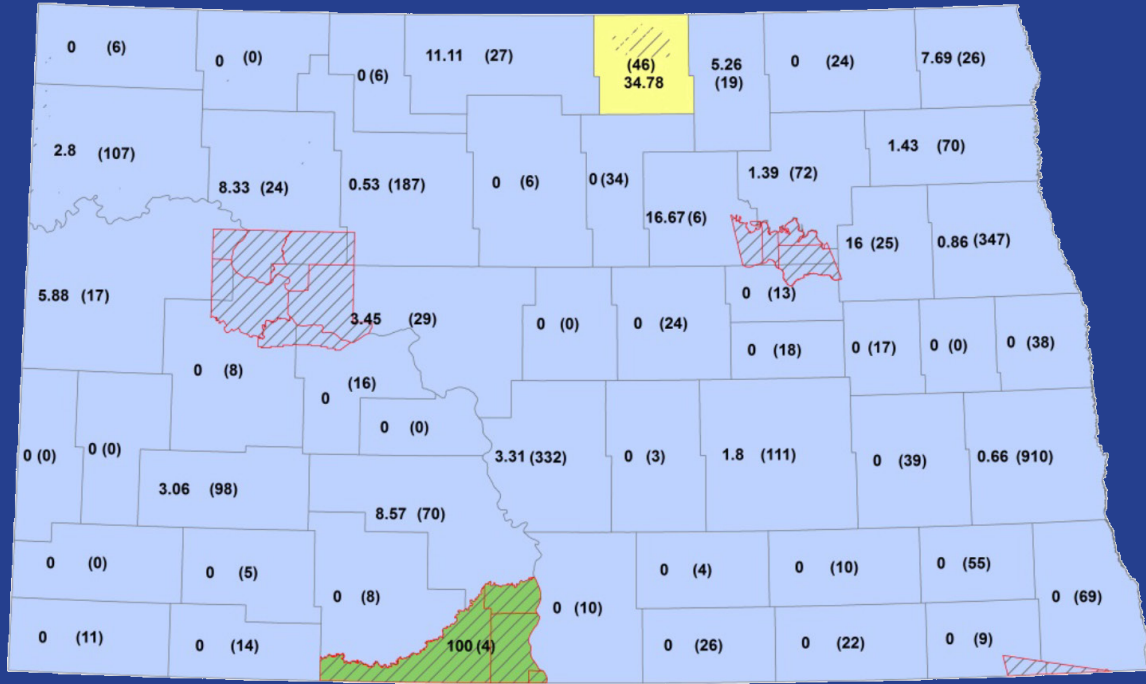
Total RNs = 9,586 American Indian RNs = 104



*Number in parentheses indicates the total number of employed ND RNs in the county

Percentage of Employed LPNs Who Are American Indian as Compared to Total Number of Employed ND LPNs in Each County

Total LPNs = 3,022 American Indian LPNs = 72



*Number in parentheses indicates the total number of employed ND LPNs in the county

Conclusion

Year two of the Sustaining Career Pathways for American Indian Health Professionals in North Dakota Project continued to make significant strides in addressing the underrepresentation of American Indians in healthcare careers. The program looks to gain further traction in years three and four, with the end goal of having a solid nursing pipeline established for the American Indian people in North Dakota.

Thank You Project Partners!

Cankdeska Cikana Community College
Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University
Mount Sinai School of Medicine
NDSU Environmental and Conservation Sciences
North Dakota Center for Nursing
NDSU Department of Nursing
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