

Background

- Native American health professionals and researchers are needed to develop culturally relevant education for a growing cadre of students who are entering the public health workforce.
- For aspiring health professionals on rural reservations, education and training opportunities are limited. Native Nations can support culturally-based education by designing programs and passing policy to achieve health equity through cultural strengths.
- Education that uses an asset-based approach offers a unique path for students to document their own and their communities' resilience strategies. The Navajo NARCH Partnership incorporates an asset-based pathway that is grounded in the Diné Educational Philosophy, Sa'áh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóo (SNBH). SNBH provides principles for protection from life's imperfections and development of wellbeing.

High School Pathway

Indigenous Summer Enhancement Program (ISEP)

- 2 week in-person program at Diné College - Tsaile, Az
 - Week 1: Introduction to Public Health, Health Research, & Diné Education Philosophy
 - Week 2: Service-Learning Component
- 10-15 applicants every year
- Returning students are welcome to return as peer mentors

High School Public Health Internship Program

- Hybrid Public Health Research Experience
- 4 hours a week time commitment
 - 3 hrs - Meet with respective internship site & site mentors
 - 1 hr - Meet with Navajo NARCH High School Team for mini-lessons
- Community Partners have included:
 - Diné Policy Institute
 - Bidii Baby Foods, LLC
 - Navajo Epidemiology Center
 - Navajo Department of Health
 - Navajo Maternal & Child Health
 - Johns Hopkins University Center for American Indian Health
 - Southwest Health Equity Research Collaborative (SHERC) - NAU

Digital Storytelling Health Careers Workshop

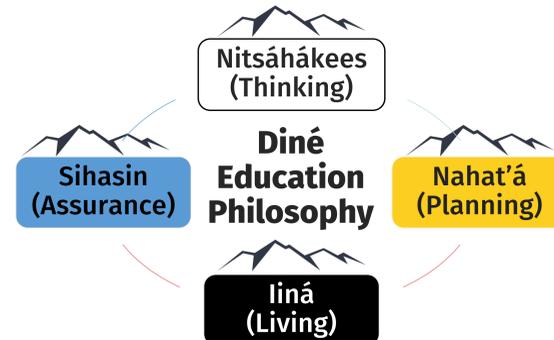
- Hybrid workshop - 2 hrs/week for 7 sessions
 - High school students in-person
 - College students via zoom
- Partner college students with high school students to learn how to navigate from high school to college
- College students to interview BSPH Alumni to identify their current career paths

Objective

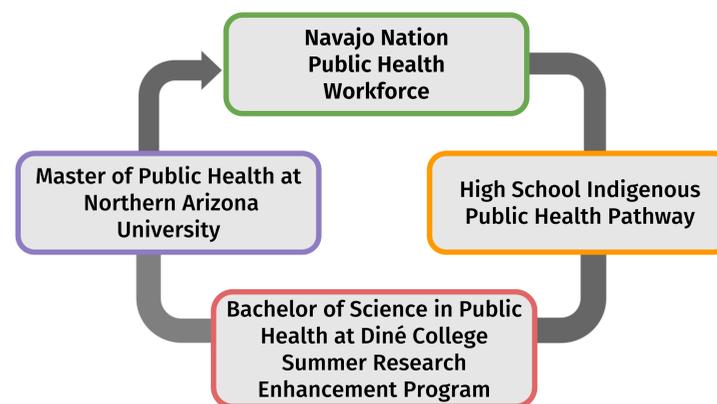
- Diné College (Navajo Nation Tribal College) and Northern Arizona University partnered to build the social and institutional infrastructure needed to enhance the Navajo Nation's professional public health capacity by training Navajo students, practitioners, and researchers.

Methods

Program and Curriculum Framework:



Educational Pathway to Strengthen Public Health Capacity:



Graduate Pathway

Master of Public Health - Indigenous Health Track

- 48-credit program → complete in 2 years
- Cohorts range from 2-10 students
- Health Promotion core courses + 4 American Indian specific courses

Graduate Certificate in Public Health (GCERT)

- 12-credit program
- Averages 5 students per semester
- Designed for working public health professionals to advance their careers at a flexible, part-time pace.

Undergraduate Pathway

Bachelor of Science in Public Health (BSPH) at Diné College

- Averages 100 students
- BSPH Graduates
 - Averages 8 graduates
- Previous program includes associates degree and certificate program:
 - Averages 50 students

Summer Research Enhancement Program (SREP)

- Averages 15 students per summer
- 10-week curriculum: didactic and practical
 - Diné Educational Philosophy
 - Resilience Theories
 - Research Methods
 - 6-week Practicum
- Week 1-3
 - Intensive classroom based sessions
- Week 4-9
 - 6 week internship with a public health professional in home community
 - Organizations
 - Diné College Land Grant Office
 - Navajo Epidemiology Center
 - Kayenta Indian Health Service
 - Coconino County Health Department
 - Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment
 - Johns Hopkins University Center for American Indian Health
- Week 10
 - 1 week data analysis and presentations

Conclusions

- Students' report the experiential learning and American Indian focus of the program encouraged an interest in health careers or public health service and research.
- Pathways provide insight into contextual factors influencing health in Native American communities and effective strategies to address health disparities.

References

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