Success of the Alaska Native Science Research Partnership for Health (ANSRPH)

Background: In order to conduct research on the health disparities of Alaska Natives, there is a need for: 1) more Alaska Native health researchers and 2) more non-Native researchers trained to work with the Alaska Native community. Building such culturally appropriate health research capacity takes time.

Purpose: To build a one-on-one mentoring program for both students and current health professionals to gain the research skills needed to improve their ability to address Alaska Native health disparities.

Methods: Under the University of Alaska’s Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR), the Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies at the University of Alaska Anchorage in partnership with the Copper River Native Association and the Alaska Native Epidemiology Center and the Alaska Native Epidemiology Center (at the time, ANEC was within the Alaska Native Health Board), was awarded a National Institute of Health (NIH) grant (MD000499-01) from the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities through its EXPORT program (EXcellence in Partnerships, Outreach, Research and Training). A system of apprentice interest applications and capacity was developed, along with a series of memorandum of agreements with a number of collaborating entities, so individuals wanting specific health research skills could be paired with mentors who could provide the opportunity for real world training and application.

Results: At the time of this abstract, over three dozen apprentices were assisted in developing health research skills, and produced a number of products, including: 1) a peer reviewed article in Alaska Medicine (prepared by six of the apprentices); 2) a presentation by a group of students of their research at the 2005 Microbiological Society meeting; 3) contributions of apprentices to the collection of interviews, qualitative analysis, and report preparations for the National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Elders (NRC); 4) contributions of apprentices to the collection of materials, the development of annotations, and the preparation of reports for an ethnobotanical report for the Aleut International Association, published by the eight-nation Arctic Council’s Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna working group; and 5) with the help of ANSRPH mentors, apprentices submitted proposals to NIH so they could conduct their own research.

Conclusion: ANSRPH has been far more successful than originally proposed. The response from Alaska Native students—particularly those in three graduate programs (Psychology, Public Health, and Social Work)—has been dramatic. In light of the additional requests for training and partnership, ANSRPH is requesting additional supplemental funds to expand the services. ANSRPH has prepared a P20 proposal application in partnership with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and MandiAssociation that builds from this success.

Chancellor’s Award for Excellence

The ANSRPH team receives the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence.

Success of the Alaska Native Science Research Partnership for Health (ANSRPH)

University of Alaska Anchorage, Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies, Anchorage, AK: Carol Ballew, PhD

Helping Communities

The Alaska Native Research Partnership for Health Project

A key to involving more Alaska Natives in health research is using research results to improve the health of the communities. The Alaska Native Research Partnership for Health (ANSRPH) is a University of Alaska Anchorage - Copper River Native Association collaboration that builds from this success.

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