CARING FOR OUR OWN PROGRAM.

Montana State University’s College of Nursing is working to improve health care for American Indian and Alaska Native people by increasing the number of nurses who can provide clinically excellent and culturally sensitive care for tribal communities.

CLOSING THE GAP WITH CULTURE IN MIND.

Nursing is a very special profession, where we are called to serve individuals, families and communities with healthcare needs that range from around the clock critical care to wellness visits. Cultural sensitivity is of the utmost importance for nurses who engage so intimately with families in American Indian communities.

Encouraging and supporting the nursing profession within tribal communities maximizes our capacity to improve the health and wellbeing of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples.

MSU’s Caring for Our Own Program (CO-OP) is devoted to this effort and has made strides in increasing its American Indian nursing student enrollment, which is now equal to the percentage of Montana’s American Indian population—6.5 percent.

There remains a substantial gap, however, in the number of American Indian nurses in the workforce. And the overall health of Native Americans as compared to the general population also tells us that we have much work left to accomplish.

BY THE NUMBERS

<1% of the professional nursing workforce in the U.S. is American Indian or Alaska Native

6.5% of Montana’s population is American Indian

15 the number of years difference in the mean life expectancy between whites and American Indians

CO-OP FUNDING PRIORITIES

PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT

SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

SUPPORT MSU’S CARING FOR OUR OWN PROGRAM AND MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OUR AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES.
ELEMENTS OF CO-OP.

Student Support Services
In order to expand nursing opportunities for American Indian and Alaska Native students and assist them in overcoming educational and economic barriers to earning a college degree, CO-OP provides the following:

- Academic advising provided with cultural appreciation
- Tutoring and group-study sessions
- Seminar for Native American and Alaska Native nursing students
- Summer success program to prepare students for college life
- Stipends [Scholarships] for qualified students
- Strong network of support
- Preparatory support for passing the registered nurse licensure exam (NCLEX-RN®)
- Resume and job application assistance post-graduation

WHAT IT TAKES.
$9,000 to provide six one-time scholarships
$37,500 to endow one scholarship annually
$1.25M to endow thirty scholarships annually
$150,000 to cover annual program expenses
$5M to sustain the program into the future

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We are extremely committed to the Native communities here in Montana, and we’re proud to say that of the nearly 100 graduates of the Caring For Our Own Program, an overwhelming majority have returned to their reservations to provide care.

—Dean Helen Melland,
College of Nursing
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