

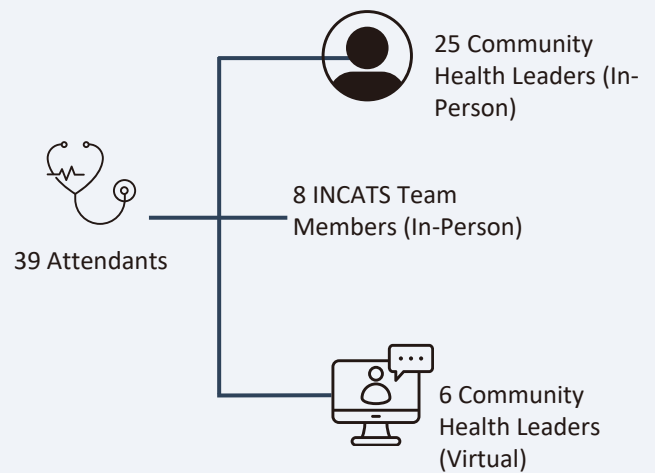


APRIL 6TH, 2024

THE INCATS TRIBAL ACADEMIC PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP (TAPP) SUMMIT REPORT

On April 6th, 2024, the INCATS program hosted the second Tribal Academic Practice Partnership Summit, co-sponsored by the AIH-AHEC (American Indian Health – Area Health Education Center). The summit’s theme centered on “Growing and Sustaining the Tribal Nursing Workforce” with a goal to identify needs and brainstorm solutions throughout the nursing career pathway. The TAPP Summit serves as a mechanism for collaboration between leaders from tribal clinics, community colleges, universities, and tribal workforce development teams, with the aim to create pathways for AI/AN people interested in nursing, provide valuable continuing education to nursing professionals, and develop a practice network to strengthen access to nursing education at basic and advanced levels to improve healthcare delivery for Arizona Tribal communities.

ATTENDANTS



REPRESENTATIVES

FROM :

- American Indian Health - Area Health Education Center
- Fort Defiance Indian Health Board
- San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation,
- Pima Community College
- Northern Arizona University
- Winslow Indian Health Center
- Dine College
- University of Arizona College of Nursing Students and Leadership
- Indian Health Services
- iHEART



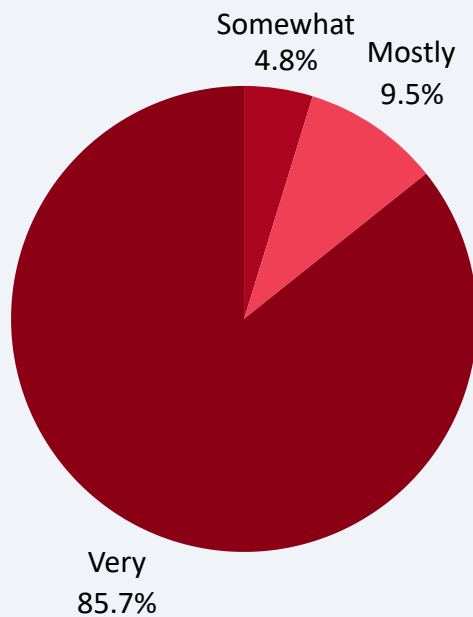
Traditional healer and counselor, Miguel Flores, gives summit blessing before beginning the day

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE TOPICS

- More healthcare representatives
- Health equity in trans and many spirited
- Sharing what resources are offered to students
- Showcase recruitment & retention with other healthcare facilities across the state
- Spirituality and western
- You're not alone
- Value the person and what does that look like as a student
- Retention and recruitment rates
- Strategic planning
- How to respond to discrimination and micro-aggression
- Cultural competency for faculty
- Mentorship programs across nursing programs
- Action plans which have been initiated from today's summit
- Community-based experiences for nursing students
- Systemic change
- Scholarship
- How the 3 Universities can come together to approach the nursing crisis
- Engendering trust with Native communities and individuals

Shelley Dupont
sum

ENGAGEMENT LEVELS



95.23% of summit respondents reported being mostly or very engaged



Talking Sessions and Student Panel

During the talking sessions, participants engaged in breakout groups to identify barriers and potential solutions to growing, nurturing, and sustaining AI/AN nurses. After each breakout, the groups reconvened to share the top three key challenges and solutions they discussed. The breakout groups included representatives from various tribal healthcare entities, organizations, and academic partners. The following insights provide an overview of some of the key points of the discussions and overarching themes.

Insights from Session 1: Planting

The planting session breakout groups focused on the pre-secondary education phase of the nursing pathway, spanning topics such as youth outreach, engaging the current healthcare workforce, and overcoming barriers to entry into higher education. A comment was shared from a recent conversation with a student looking to transfer into a BSN nursing program: “Having an individual person that said, ‘You can do this, let me talk to you about it, here’s what to do...having that human touch meant a lot’”. Despite the many barriers facing potential nursing students, these words from a current student highlighted both predominant needs and one of the foremost solutions in reaching and supporting the future and current tribal nursing workforce.

Challenges Identified

Navigating complex and inconsistent requirements:

- Difficult to parse nursing program entry requirements due to differing prerequisites, dense informational documents, and issues with credit transfer
- High GPA requirements and testing barriers

Insufficient Support Systems and Communication:

- Lack of nursing advisors and poor responsiveness.
- Complex messaging particularly affects first-generation students.
- Inconsistent mentoring and lack of connection with role models.

Limited Early Engagement and Community Dynamics:

- Lack of exposure to nursing role models and clinical environments.
- Insufficient early outreach and engagement at younger educational levels.
- Financial and family dynamics hinder students' ability to pursue higher education

Proposed Solutions

Simplify Information and Technology Utilization:

- Provide simpler, clearer messaging about program requirements and logistics.
- Use short, informative videos and develop a broader educational road map.
- Leverage technology for outreach, including virtual tours, simulation labs, and AI/automated responses.

Strive to Provide Personalized and Consistent Support:

- Implement consistent mentoring and attract role models in nursing.
- Ensure warm handoffs and personal communication to build confidence.
- Secure grants and funding to support advising and mentorship programs.

Focus on Engagement and Community Involvement:

- Increase high school outreach through events, classroom visits, and summits.
- Introduce healthcare professionals to students early to provide information and inspiration.
- Provide stipends and incentives to attract community members to assist with recruiting efforts, and involve the community in recruitment and retention strategies.

Insights from Session 2: Growing

The “Growing” breakout session discussion focused on the secondary education stage, including tribal institutions, community colleges, and universities. The themes identified emphasize building community and providing holistic, culturally relevant support and access to needed resources for students enrolled in higher education systems.

Challenges Identified

Insufficient Support Systems:

- Lack of inclusivity in existing support systems.
- Need for more chemistry tutors and mental health support.
- Missing mentorship and guidance before starting nursing programs.

Need Cultural Competency and Community Building:

- Limited cultural competency in academic settings
- Need for spaces where students can connect and share their cultural backgrounds.
- Missing support systems indicate institutions may not have yet achieved the goal of strong inclusivity

Lacking Orientation and Experiential Learning:

- Overwhelming processes for students new to the program.
- Need for better experiential learning opportunities and community outreach.
- Importance of understanding individual learning styles and incorporating these into clinical training.

Proposed Solutions:

Develop Enhanced Support Systems and Resources:

- Increase the number of chemistry tutors and mental health support services.
- Implement guidelines and mentorship programs to provide better guidance before and during nursing programs.
- Improve awareness and accessibility of campus resources for Native American students.

Foster Cultural Competency and Community Building:

- Organize events such as potlucks, games, and cultural projects to foster inclusivity and community and create space for talking circles, blessings, and ceremony.
- Develop faculty cultural competency through training and development programs.
- Address ways to increase the recruitment of of Indigenous faculty and staff.

Improve Orientation and Experiential Learning:

- Introduce pre-semester immersion programs for first-year students, including cultural assessments, resources, and community-building activities.
- Prior to start date, ensure students have access to study skill training and learning style assessments; review and create plans with an advisor.
- Provide opportunities for clinical rotations on reservations and service learning in rural areas.
- Develop processes to make the transition into nursing programs less overwhelming, such as interactive games for learning and increased support from upper-year student mentors.

Insights from Session 3: Sustaining

The “Sustaining” breakout session discussion focused on post-graduation from nursing school and individuals within the tribal nursing workforce. The themes related to recruitment and retention strategies and potential avenues to reduce the growing burnout rates.

Challenges Identified:

Lengthy and Complex Hiring Processes:

- Navajo Nation hiring process is reported to be lengthy (3-6 months) and is often only able to offer rates lower than support staff in urban areas.
- Hiring processes are long, creating barriers for quick employment.
- Housing barriers complicate the hiring process, with issues related to travel pay.

Organizational Culture and Alignment:

- Nurses culture, mission, and values frequently are misaligned with those of organization.
- Institutions often have unsupportive and disrespectful cultures impacting turnover rates.
- New graduates and students are pressured to advance quickly and often cannot be paired with locum or travel nurses.

Retention and Professional Development Challenges:

- There is a need for supportive and respectful work environments.
- Lack of adequate continuing education units (CEUs) and professional development opportunities.
- Need for post-graduation support and mentorship to ensure sustained engagement and reduce burnout.

Proposed Solutions:

Streamline Hiring and Support Systems:

- Implement HEAL Nursing orientation programs to streamline hiring and onboarding.
- Utilize alumni for recruitment and mentorship to foster a supportive community.
- Develop Native American traveler or staffing companies to ensure culturally sensitive placements.



Graphic artwork provided live by Tohono O'odham artist, Derrick Gonzales

Improve Organizational Culture:

- Promote organizational cultures that value and respect nursing staff.
- Ensure leadership is visible and supportive, fostering a positive work environment.
- Recognize and reward staff through meaningful incentives and professional development opportunities.

Further Retention Strategies and Professional Development:

- Provide post-graduation support, including mentorship and leadership programs.
- Ensure safe scheduling practices to prevent burnout and improve patient care.
- Offer comprehensive benefits, loan repayment programs, and tuition reimbursement to retain staff

Student Panel

Our TAPP Summit attendants sat in community with four students from the University of Arizona at various points in their nursing careers. The panelists included Dr. Kimberly Yazzie (recent DNP graduate) Jolynn Robbins (recent BSN graduate), Ariel Freddie (current BSN student), and Hailey Capitan (current pre-nursing student) who graciously shared their experiences, strengths, and struggles in their journey to becoming a nurse. Within each of their stories, they highlighted experiences common to AI/AN students in healthcare and shared advice and encouragement to incoming students. Some of this advice included not comparing your journey to that of others and seeking out resources and assistance, which can be a particular challenge for driven first-generation students. They also pointed out key areas where institutions need to be held accountable for lack of education on social determinants of health. They emphasized the role of community and shared struggles with cultural adjustments and lack of awareness of available resources before being connected to UA programs that offer community support and tutoring services, such as INCATS and the Arizona Nursing Inclusive Excellence (ANIE) program.

One student panelist discussed the barrier of distance from home and emphasized the need for new students to make connections. They also discussed overcoming challenges in the prerequisite courses and offered advice. A panelist relayed an experience where an advisor discouraged them from pursuing nursing despite meeting requirements and having high grades.

The panelists brought forward issues of disconnection, insufficient resources, microaggressions, exhaustion in constantly providing education on health inequities, and racism from authority figures in academia. They suggested better cultural integration, an improvement on the universities' part to train faculty and students on health inequities, increased access to one-on-one mental health resources, advocating for proactive measures to create safe spaces with cultural sensitivity and inclusion, particularly supportive spaces for Native students, and integrated cultural practices. Mentorship from other Native American students and healthcare professionals and increasing services for AI/AN students were encouraged. Attendees commented on the students' strengths and also noted the potential burden of the multiple roles they play in addition to being nursing students; the students act as educators for their peers, instructors on cultural sensitivity and other topics, and as the one-person hub for important resources for those navigating the nursing field before and after matriculation into their program. This strongly underscored the importance of increased infrastructure, training, and resources to lessen the energy spent in additional roles that can be unique to AI/AN students.

Closing and Next Steps

The National Center for Health Workforce Analysis has predicted that the state of Arizona will have around 28,000 fewer nurses than are needed in the state by 2025. This disparity is noted to be more than any other state in the US. The vacancy rates of registered nurses sharply increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and due to high burnout rates, many RNs are at risk of leaving their employers. These workforce crises are magnified in rural and tribal health systems, with the highest vacancy rates in the Navajo region (U.S. GAO Office, 2018), indicating a need for timely steps to address the culminating crisis of healthcare shortage.

Although the healthcare shortage is urgent and troubling, particularly in tribal-serving areas, it also presents an opportunity for the tribal workforce, as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimated around 195,400 openings for registered nurses in Arizona from 2021 to 2023. The TAPP network believes the convergence of healthcare, workforce, and socioeconomic needs can be met by empowering the next generation of Tribal healthcare professionals to meet the needs of their communities by providing the needed support before, during, and following education to achieve licensure. The attendance and engagement at the 2024 INCATS Tribal-Academic-Practice Partnership Summit demonstrates the desire and willingness of healthcare leaders in Arizona to continue pursuing responsive and culturally congruent avenues to address barriers to education and advancement, ultimately strengthening the Tribal Nursing Workforce.

Our shared vision and goal of the summit is to develop a network of regional partnerships between tribal, academic, and clinical partners, transcending organizational boundaries to develop a unified approach to

advancing healthcare access for Native communities while empowering individual communities to capitalize on their strengths. These priorities now form the foundation upon which we will collectively build a robust and sustainable future for Indigenous nurses and our communities.

Objectives Moving Forward

- Continue the annual INCATS Tribal Academic Practice Partnership Summit
- Strengthen relationships and expand pathways to academic advancement with Tribal Colleges and Community Colleges through the CC-UA Collaborative Nursing Education Program (CNEP)
- Develop culturally relevant continuing education with AIH-AHEC (American Indian Health – Area Health Education Center)
- Develop a repository to share to share resources

Update from the INCATS Team

We are thrilled to announce that the IHS Department of Health and Human Services has awarded the College of Nursing INCATS Program a five-year renewal grant. This will allow us to continue supporting AI/AN students on their healthcare journeys and working toward the critical goal of strengthening the tribal nursing workforce. We would like to thank our students, community partners, staff, and faculty for supporting this endeavor and making continuation possible. This renewal is a testament to our collective achievements and dedication to our shared mission. We look forward to making a meaningful impact on the health and well-being of our communities.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with your ideas, questions, or feedback. Thank you again for your dedication to this important work.

Contact us at CON-INCATS@arizona.edu to join the TAPP email list to connect with other leaders in the Tribal Nursing Workforce and to be included in invitations for upcoming gatherings.