

Advancing Osteopathic Principles Through Traditional Knowledge and Community Engagement



COLLEGE OF
OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE
at the Cherokee Nation

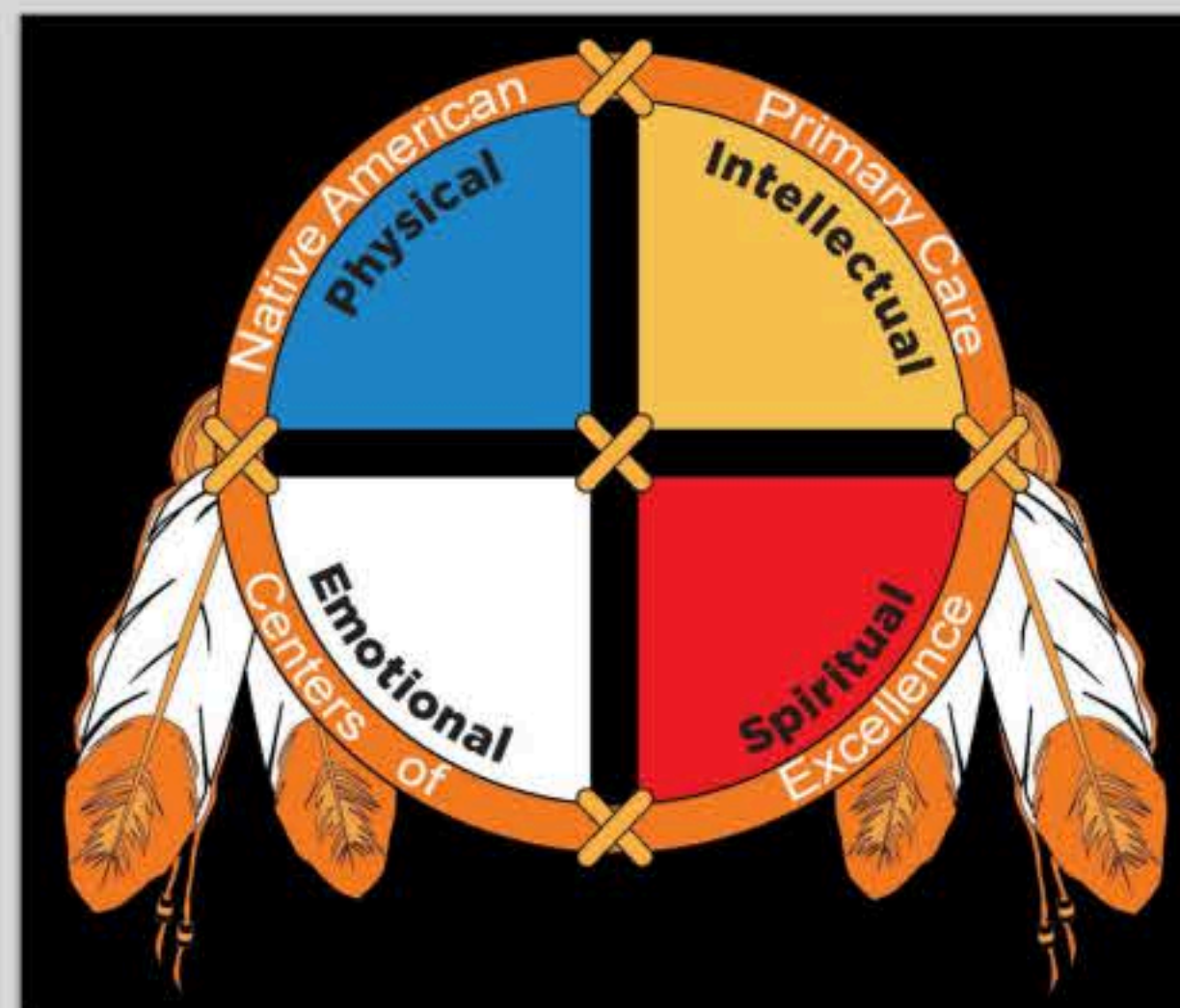
Caleb Watson, BS,^{1,2} Marli Nagel, BS,^{1,2} Kelcey Nees, BS,^{1,2} Rylee Dunlap, BS,^{1,3} Aiden Ramirez-Tatum, BS,^{1,2}

¹ Native American Students of Osteopathic Medicine, ² Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine at the Cherokee Nation, ³ Oklahoma State College of Osteopathic Medicine - Center for Health Science

ABSTRACT

Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine has a long history of recruiting and training American Indian youth through pathway programs (Native Explorers, Native OKStars) and numerous outreach events. The NASOM created the Native American Pre-Admission (NAPA) Workshop, which focuses on recruiting American Indians into primary care careers serving rural and tribal communities. Collectively, OSU-COM programs are increasing the number of American Indians entering the OSU-COM. The number of AI first year medical students enrolled in all COM schools for 2022-2023 was 107 of 36,734 or 0.3% of all enrollees. At the Cherokee Nation campus, 23.8% identify as AI and 15.2% at the Tulsa campus. Partnering with the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) would help to expand NASOM to all colleges of osteopathic medicine (COMs).

Objective 1. Similarities between osteopathic principles and traditional knowledge.



The medicine wheel represents the traditional beliefs held by many Native Americans, which are similar to the tenets of osteopathic medicine.



Fancy dancing, drumming, and signing traditional dances and songs provide good medicine for the soul.

Objective 2. Recognize the impact a more geographically robust American Indian medical student organization, one with strong ties to their communities and osteopathic principles, will have in recruiting the next generation of American Indian osteopathic physicians.

Outreach Targeting Native American and Rural Communities



Operation Orange: Medical students present a day in the life of a medical student for URM students (grades 8-12). The event includes suturing, CPR, Native American songs and dances, and lessons from admissions. This event has inspired several Native youth to apply to medical school (e.g., guest speaker Student Doctor Rylee Dunlap).



Representation at Tulsa's Native American Day Parade, building ties in the community, and inspiring Native youth.

Strong Ties and Sense of Community Through Social and Community Activities



Moccasins made by students at workshop lead by a Cherokee Nation National Treasure, Tonia Weavel. Sharing traditional practices such as this helps preserve Native culture.



Cherokee Elder and National Treasure, Gina Burnett, teaches NASOM members how to make traditional weaved baskets - a pastime that is both practical and culturally significant.



Traditionally, stickball was played to settle a dispute between individuals or groups of people, and could result in death of an opponent. Today, the game is played for sport and for wellness.

Objective 3. Identify a pathway to expanding novel student organizations to other osteopathic schools.



The inaugural class at OSU-COM CN, the only tribally affiliated medical school in US, had 100% match rate in 2024 and an AI enrollment 22.2%. Since NASOM's conception the CN class of 2027 AI enrollment has increased to 34.6%.



NASOM has provided a critical role in increasing AI recruitment, promoting the Osteopathic profession, and sharing traditional knowledge and ways with peers, staff, faculty, and administration.

CONCLUSION

NASOM has made great strides in increasing career awareness in osteopathic medicine, increasing the competitiveness of American Indian (AI) applicants to OSU-COM at Cherokee Nation, and in sharing traditional knowledge with peers and the OSU-COM community. NASOM would be an ideal organization for osteopathic schools interested in increasing the number of AI students, physicians, and those interested in serving rural and tribal communities. To inform other osteopathic schools, support from AACOM is critical. Partnering with AACOM would provide sustainability in expanding NASOM, and in turn, recruiting and training more osteopathic physicians (Native and non-Native) to serve tribal and rural communities in Indian Country and beyond.

REFERENCES

- Source: AAMC: A14.3 - <https://www.aamc.org/media/8826/download?attachment>
AACOM: Source - <https://www.aacom.org/searches/reports/report/applicants-matriculants-by-race-ethnicity-2009-2021>
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