



Preparing Our Youth to Serve First Nations

First Nations throughout Ontario are working toward self-government, including the control and management of institutions and services for their people.

Health care is one of these services. In co-operation with Health and Welfare Canada, the University of Toronto is committed to educating aboriginal professionals in every health care field. This will enable the First Nations to achieve their goal of receiving health services

- from aboriginal people
- in aboriginal languages
- in First Nations community settings.

The value of traditional aboriginal philosophies of health and healing practices is recognized in the Indian Health Careers Program. In First Nations communities, medical practices can complement traditional practices to ensure the healing of the

whole person in body, mind and spirit. The Program strives to link these, so that the benefits of both can be appreciated.

Traditional people are part of the activities of the Indian Health Careers Program with Education Counsellors, university faculty and aboriginal students. They serve as teachers and role models for young people. They reinforce the need for a strong aboriginal identity among students facing rigorous training in the health sciences. They also stress the need for service to one's people and community.

OUR GOALS

The Indian Health Careers Program supports aboriginal students in their efforts to obtain professional qualifications in the field of health by:

- recruiting aboriginal students for health science programs.
- promoting access to professional health education through the



- creation of admission paths for aboriginal students.
- providing support services for aboriginal students in health programs at the University of Toronto.
- providing cultural workshops on identity, aboriginal health issues, traditional healing practices.

NEWS ON ADMISSIONS

In September of 1989, there were 30 aboriginal students at the University of Toronto studying Pharmacy; Dentistry; Physical Therapy; Medicine; Speech Pathology and Audiology; and Nursing. A Bachelor of Science Program leading to Medicine is now in place.

There are 40 more aboriginal students at other universities who are preparing for professional careers in health and who are part of our Ontario student network.

In the high-school system, the IHCP has identified 58 young people in grades 10-13 who want to enter a university to study health care. The students come from reserves all over Ontario; 70 First Nations have produced students interested in health professions.

The IHCP helps students choose careers, prepare application forms, find housing and daycare services. All applications are followed through the admissions process to make sure the student has every chance of entering the program of his/her choice. Counsellors and academic tutors are available to students. Cultural workshop are offered on a regular basis to reinforce identity and self-esteem while students proceed through the years of professional education.

The staff of the IHCP have met with the following faculties who have agreed to set seats aside in their programs for qualified aboriginal applicants: Speech and Language Pathology (Master's Program); Physical Therapy; Medicine; and Nursing.

Other faculties have agreed to review the applications of aboriginal students on an individual basis, so that the applications are not rejected by computer, if the academic marks are not compatible: Faculty of Arts and Science; Occupational Therapy; Dentistry; Pharmacy; Nursing; Physical and Health Education; and Health Administration.



If your community has interested parents, counsellors or students who want to know more about health education and careers, please contact: IHCP, 214 College Street, Room # 304, University of Toronto, (416) 978-8227.

We would be happy to meet your First Nation to talk about preparing our youth to serve First Nations in the health care field.