



cariboo college

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIVE HEALTH CAREERS ACCESS PROGRAM BEGINS

Native people traditionally take fewer post-secondary educational courses than would be expected on the basis of their population in the Kamloops region. This is particularly true of health career programs, such as nursing or medical laboratory technology. At Cariboo College this last year only 4 natives were enrolled out of 275 health students.

As native groups move to become more independent in areas such as health care, they are frequently frustrated by the lack of qualified practitioners among their own people. "Of the native students who do enroll in college programs, the success rate is relatively low," says Dr. David Cane, Director of the College's Science and Health Programs. "This is not generally because of lack of ability, but rather a result of poor study skills and an inadequate background in comprehension, writing, math and science areas".

Cariboo College has been working with representatives of local Indian bands and organizations to address this problem, and has planned a new program to begin in mid-August. The Native Health Careers Access Program (NHCAP) will register up to 20 students of native origin, and give them an intensive 9 months of training in mathematics, English and the sciences, as well as an in-depth orientation to the Canadian health care system and health careers. Following graduation, students will be eligible for admission to the various health programs at Cariboo: Nursing, Long Term Care/Homemaker, Medical Laboratory Technology and Respiratory Therapy.

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Dr. Cane stresses that the entire access program will emphasize interpreting the courses, and health care, in ways which are relevant for native people. The program will also rely on generating a peer support group for native students.

One of the goals of NHCAP is to remain accountable to the native people of the Cariboo College region. This will be achieved through an active Advisory Committee with wide representation. A great many Indian groups have already indicated their support of the program.

The NHCA program will be funded by the Medical Services Branch of Health and Welfare Canada, and the Department of Indian Affairs.

Further information about the program can be obtained from Dr. David Cane, or the program's coordinator, David St. Amand, at 374-0123.

For further information please contact:

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