

American Indian nurses awarded \$60,000 contract

The number of American Indians within the nursing profession are grossly underrepresented and in order to address this problem, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Health Resources Administration, has awarded a \$60,000 contract to the American Indian Nurses Association (AINA) to study the feasibility of developing a model nursing program for American Indians at Haskell Indian Junior College (HIJC).

The "Program Model" is based on concepts of open learning and career mobility and is designed to allow ease in transition from practical nursing (LPN) to technical nursing (associate Degree). The AINA, a professional organization of American Indian Registered Nurses, will conduct the feasibility study at HIJC in Lawrence, Kansas.

The long range goal of the study is to provide criteria for the development of future nursing programs within the Indian Community based on the concepts of career mobility and open learning.

The results of the year-long study will help to develop a mechanism to increase the number of Indians in Nursing and to promote a more even distribution of Indian nurses throughout the various levels of nursing.

to meet the needs of the Indian population, all schools of nursing would have to increase admission of Indian students by more than 500% and maintain that increase for many years.

The need for a more equitable distribution of Indian nurses throughout the levels of nursing is as critical as the need to increase actual numbers. Within the Indian Health Service, for example, the majority of leadership and administrative positions are held by non-Indian nurses.

This was the first year that an Indian nurse had been assigned to the Washington level and that

was in a consultant role. The position of Chief Nurse has never been held by an Indian. All Chief Nurse Officers in the Indian Health Service are non-Indian, and seventy-two per cent (72%) of the directors of nursing are non-Indians.

Indian nurses in education are almost invisible with only an estimated sixteen (16) Indian nurses teaching in schools of nursing.

Presently there are only four hundred sixty-four (464) Indians enrolled in schools of nursing and the need for more numbers of Indian Nurses is apparent in the present ratio of nurses per

100,000 population. In the Indian population there are only 36 registered nurses per 100,000 and in the non-Indian population there are 360 registered nurses per 100,000. This ratio will not change within the near future, and in order to obtain an equitable ratio of Indian R.N.s