Meet Kim Cunningham-Hartwig, MD . . .

Dr. Cunningham–Hartwig is a member of the rural community of Lapwai on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation in Idaho. A varsity basketball player on an academic and athletic scholarship during college, she made the rounds of the Native American basketball tournament as a young woman. As an undergrad, Dr. Cunningham–Hartwig participated in several pipeline programs that helped prepare her for college and a career in medicine. The University of Washington, School of Medicine’s (UWSOM) Prematriculation Program, sponsored by the Health Careers Opportunity Program, helped ease her transition to medical school. While at UWSOM, she was also an active member of the Medicine Wheel Society, under the auspices of the school’s Native American Center of Excellence (NACOE). She graduated in 2003 and completed her residency in Family Medicine in Spokane, Washington. She is currently practicing Family Medicine in Spokane, and plans to return to the Nez Perce reservation.

Who says you can’t do it all? Dr. Cunningham-Hartwig attended medical school while raising four children with her husband. An active HCOP and NACOE participant, she plans to return to the Nez Pearce reservation in Idaho.

About the Program

- The NACOE is a Center of Excellence (COE), which is authorized under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act. Together with the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), COEs function to increase the representation of minority and disadvantaged students in the health professions.

- As a regional medical school, UWSOM students come mostly from Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho; students complete their first year in their home states, and come to Seattle for the rest of their training. Thus, the UWSOM HCOP and COE grants directly benefit students from all five states.

- The HCOP and NACOE at UWSOM sponsor a number of programs, including Summer Medical & Dental Education Program, Prematriculation Program, Indian Health Pathway, and Medicine Wheel Society.

- The primary goals of the programs are to attract Native American and Alaska Native students into the study and practice of medicine, to recognize Native healing traditions and integrate them into Western medical education, and to encourage research into Native health issues.

- The Indian Health Pathway certification program prepares both Native and non-Native medical students for careers in American Indian Health. The IHP provides a unique educational experience through the use of specialized lecture series, problem-base learning, immersion clinical experiences in medical practices that serve the American Indian/Alaskan Native communities, and research opportunities.

- More information on the activities is available on the program website: http://faculty.washington.edu/dacosta/nacoe/nacoehome.html

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