What are we doing now: As the 2020 summer is now coming to an end, we transition to welcome the fall semester. The Annual NARI Follow-up Survey will be sent out soon. It is the time for you to reflect proudly on your academic and professional journeys and share those successes with us. Your accomplishments help us with our renewals of our NARI-NIDDK, NARI-NICHD, and NARI NHLBI R25 grants. Thus, your participation by completing the survey is vital for the future of the program! Please stay tune for the survey while we make modifications for easier access and fill it out when you get it!

Fall semester is also conference season. There are many national conferences that our participants can attend including the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) National Conference, and the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). Both will be virtual conferences this year due to COVID-19. Additional conference opportunities include the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS).

Spotlight Participant: While the numbers of NARI participants have increased over the last 10 years, 20.3% enter into medical school. Of the 20.3%, six former NARI participants completed their medical school education and are now on the road to their residency training programs. These 6 individuals continue to receive hands-on training and work alongside other healthcare practitioners in a variety of hospitals and clinics throughout the U.S. We would like to highlight two of our former NARI participants. Former NARI Participant Clint Brayfield, MD (Diné), a first-year resident writes, “the most
exciting part is finally being able to take real ownership of my physician-patient relationships. For the first time, I feel like I am THE health care provider for my patients and what I say and do matters – it’s impacting another person’s life.” At the University of New Mexico, Family Medicine Residency Program, Dr. Brayfield has an opportunity to work for many indigenous peoples who seek medical needs in the Albuquerque area.

“After completing residency, I have my eyes set on pursing a Maternal Child Health Fellowship so that I can be better equipped to provide healthcare for pregnant women and newborns on the Navajo reservation. My hope is to be the family doctor that can see it all and do it all – true full-spectrum family medicine,” writes Dr. Brayfield. We are excited to hear that Dr. Brayfield is thriving and well-prepared for his life in family medicine.

Dr. Brayfield has credited part of his success with the NARI program. “From my NARI experience, I learned how to execute community-based research and how to properly prepare pilot studies. These skills were invaluable for me because at the medical school I attended we were required to complete a research project in order to graduate. Luckily for me, I knew how to get the process started, understood the factors involved with the type of research I wanted to do and overall, it felt less intimidating for me. It allowed me to play a bigger role in my research and I had a network of research mentors to connect with if I needed their help,” writes Dr. Brayfield. Along with the research training received while an intern in 2013, Dr. Brayfield also credits the relationship with his colleagues who are now his life-long friends. He writes, “with this I made some lasting friendships which, to me, was the most beneficial part of the whole NARI program. I’ve been able to celebrate graduations from both undergrad and medical school with them, see them becomes parents, see them become successful researchers and scientists, and even see them contribute to the NARI program in major ways. I am super grateful for these friendships. They would not have happened if it weren’t for this program.” The road may be long but there are plenty of beautiful scenic stops along the way.

Former NARI participant, Dr. Alex Kivimaki (Ho-Chuck), second-year resident writes, “The largest part of the transition from medical school to residency was the steep learning curve once you realize you are in the doctor role. It was great seeing patients and learning from them in medical school, but acting as their provider and working with each individual to develop a plan of care has been the most enjoyable part of residency. You’re able to see their growth through each clinic visit or hospital admission which is quite rewarding. I was also fortunate to travel to Seattle for my training which has provided another element to residency as I have been able to explore the Pacific Northwest during my time

Alex Kivimaki, MD with fellow Resident Physicians at Seattle Indian Health Board Clinic.
away from the hospital and clinic.” Dr. Kivimaki is a resident-physician with the Swedish Cherry Hill Family Medicine and Seattle Indian Health Board clinic where he has worked with Native communities. His mentoring experiences in the laboratory and clinics with Dr. David Symons and Dr. Jennifer Majersik has been comprehensive which has help guided him towards his goals of becoming a physician. Dr. Kivimaki is looking forward to traveling the world before returning to his home territory of the Ho-Chuck nation to practice Family Medicine.

**Message from Spotlight NARI Researcher:**
“Summer is usually bustling in the lab – our 3-person operation doubles in size as we add students, including an intern from the NARI program every year. Each summer we look forward to all the new faces. It is exciting to introduce new students to our work, explain the significance of our studies on invasive bacterial pathogens, and help them learn new skills. By the end of the summer they come to see themselves as part of the research team and laboratory family. I still hear from my students’ years after they move on.

This summer, of course, was different. In early March the lab was shut down. While we were fortunate to be allowed to restart some of our work in April, we have had to limit the number of people in the lab and of course no students have been allowed. Our University of Utah undergraduate has been stuck doing “virtual” lab work from home. It is quiet and a bit lonely. A lot of what’s great about science is the in-lab interactions and informal discussions.

My clinical practice is in pediatric infectious diseases, and I should theoretically be very busy. However, with children less affected by COVID, patients avoiding the hospital in general, and my colleagues with training in epidemiology and infection control shouldering most of the burden of guidance and planning, my hospital work has also been slow. Spending time in the hospital, however, provides the most opportunity for things to be normal – going into work every day, interacting with patients as well as fellows and medical students, and clear tasks to accomplish by the end of the day. A nice change from my zoom-augmented home/office/school house.

At home I have four kids who spent the spring trying to learn remotely and keep themselves busy. Two of my children missed the end of their senior year in high school, had a “drive by” graduation and picked colleges without the opportunity to travel to campuses they had never seen. But, as many people have said, the silver lining has been the time we have spent together. Dinner every night, walks around the block with our new, very old “corona-dog”, hearing about virtual summer camp at lunchtime and badminton in the front yard in the evening.

As I look toward the uncertainty of the fall, I am hopeful that we will figure out how to be safe, including at work and at school and thankful for all that I have – a job that lets me contribute to children’s health through research and clinical work, a supportive team and a close family. I look forward to next summer when I can share my work again with students from NARI and hear about how they weathered this storm.”

Since 2012, Dr. Anne Blaschke has mentored four (4) NARI participants. Of the four, she
has had the opportunity to mentor the same two participants twice as they found great interest in pediatric infectious diseases. “The Blaschke lab has been one of the best places I have ever worked and would be a fantastic environment for and student who wants to learn and develop their skills as both a researcher and a prospective medical student,” writes former NARI participant, Matthew Lassey. Dr. Blaschke focuses on providing an outstanding research environment for all her NARI participants by customizing each participants’ individual needs for their summer internship. She has allowed her participants to shadow her during clinical hours which has given the opportunity to learn the process of caring for patients. Dr. Blaschke has played a critical role in the career trajectory of the 4 NARI participants and we look forward to placing more students with her in the summer of 2021.

Matthew Lassey explaining his summer research project to Dr. Maija Holsti.

Community Events:

**SACNAS Webinar**, Overcoming Discrimination, August 12th from 12:00pm-1:00pm (PT)

**Back to School Resource Fair Drive Thru** – August 13, 2020, 9:00am-noon and 4:00pm-7:00pm

**Dr. Angelo P. Giardino, Equity: A Quality Domain and a Pediatric Call to Action, Pediatric Ground Rounds YouTube Video**

**5th Annual American Indians Accessing Health Professions Program**, AAIP and UC Davis School of Medicine, August 14-15, 2020

**National Native Health Research Training Initiative Webinar Series**, Small Populations Big Problems, Native Research Network, August 19, 2020 at 2:00pm

**Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK), Demystifying the graduate school application process virtual series, September 14, 15, 16 from 5:00-8:00pm**

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