



Shannon Zullo

What is a Dermatologist?

A dermatologist is a physician who is trained to evaluate and treat patients with benign and malignant disorders of the skin, hair, nails, and mucous membranes. According to a 2015 report by the American Medical Association, there are approximately 12,000 practicing dermatologists in the United States. Of these, only 28 self-identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native¹.

Shannon Zullo (Diné) is a medical student in the class of 2020 at The University of Arizona, College of Medicine in Tucson. She was born and raised on the Navajo reservation in northeast Arizona and aspires to be a dermatologist. She received her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Duke University and a master's degree in Cellular and Molecular Medicine from The University of Arizona. Shannon is an engaged leader, researcher, and future clinician.

In her time as a medical student, Shannon has led both the Dermatology Interest Group and SunSmarts, a Commitment to Underserved Peoples (CUP) program that aims to increase sun safety awareness. Shannon is active in the Native American community and served as co-president of the Association of Native American Medical Students. As a testament of her leadership, Shannon

was recognized nationally and received the American Medical Association's 2016 Minority Scholars Award and the National Medical Fellowship's 2015 Mary Ball Carrera Merit Scholarship. In 2018, she received the Outstanding Medical Student in Dermatology award from The University of Arizona, Department of Medicine.

As a researcher, Shannon is passionate about identifying and helping to alleviate health care disparities affecting underserved populations like Native American reservation communities. She adds, "Growing up, I saw many people in my community with skin conditions who suffered from the psychosocial effects of inadequate care. As a dermatologist, I want to make a difference in helping to increase access to specialty care for Native Americans." Shannon recently conducted a study in conjunction with The University of Arizona, Department of Dermatology on dermatologic treatment disparities and knowledge gaps in Native American communities. The aim of the study was to identify the skin care habits, skin conditions, and potential treatment disparities experienced by Native Americans.

Exposure to environmental contaminants and living, playing, and working outdoors can increase the risk for skin cancer and other dermatologic conditions in native peoples. Native Americans face many barriers in accessing primary care and specialty care like dermatology. Few dermatological research studies have focused on the skin conditions affecting our Native communities, and this study is an opportunity to discover new findings that might aid in the future care and treatment of Native Americans.

References:

1. The American Medical Association. Physician Characteristics and Distribution in the U.S. 2015 ed: American Medical Association; 2015.



The University of Arizona's College of Medicine



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Contact:
Agnes Attakai, Program Coordinator
agnes@email.arizona.edu