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Browning-area students prepare for health careers

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BROWNING-AREA STUDENTS PREPARE FOR HEALTH CAREERS

MISSOULA--

Future health professionals are getting a jump on their studies in an innovative summer program at The University of Montana.

Melissa Butterfly of **Heart Butte** and Laura Hanning of **Browning** are among 21 participants in UM's Health Careers Opportunity Program, a six-week session that will conclude July 31.

HCOP's mission is to prepare minority students for the rigorous academic challenges that lie ahead of them in a health-related field of study. With a curriculum focused on Montana Indians, the program takes a culturally relevant approach to intensive study, academic orientation and recreational activities.

Students tackle tough subjects like math and science within the context of weekly themes such as youth tobacco use, substance abuse and diabetes and nutrition. Other activities include community service projects, research observation and job shadowing.

Butterfly, a member of the Blackfeet Nation, is the daughter of Burton and Helen Butterfly. She attends Heart Butte High School and is interested in a nursing career.

Hanning, also a Blackfeet, attended Blackfeet Community College before moving to Missoula, where she will attend UM's College of Technology this fall.

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The mother of an 18-month-old daughter, Hanning plans to study respiratory therapy.

HCOP applicants must have completed their junior year in high school and need a grade-point average of at least 2.5. They may be residents of any state and are not required to attend UM after completing HCOP. Participants are selected based on a combination of essays, letters of recommendations, academic performance and personal history.

To cover their expenses, students receive a stipend of \$1,680, as well as reimbursement for round-trip travel costs. UM's HCOP program, one of more than 200 nationwide, is funded through a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services.

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Glacier Reporter
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