



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team

Monday November 6, 2023

Therapeutic Poetry Program for Indigenous People Living with Dementia

Duluth, MN, Nov. 6, 2023. Dr. Antonio Paniagua Guzman, Postdoctoral Associate at the Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team, has been awarded with \$183,000 over three years by the Alzheimer's Association for his project entitled, "Therapeutic Poetry Program for Indigenous People Living with Dementia" (AARFD-23-1151307). As awardee of the Alzheimer's Association Research Fellowship to Promote Diversity (AARF-D), Dr. Paniagua Guzman (PI) and his study team will seek to work in collaboration with one of the six Bands of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe to develop and implement the first sustainable, replicable, and culturally safe poetry-based therapy program for Indigenous people living with dementia, the first of its kind in the United States.

Twelve Indigenous people living with dementia and their caregivers will attend spoken-word poetry sessions facilitated by two local, Indigenous poets. The impact and benefits of the program will be evaluated by two community researchers. This program aims to keep running after completion of the grant period and expanded to other Indigenous communities in Minnesota and beyond.

Regarding the relevance and impact of this program, Dr. Paniagua Guzman shared that, "Indigenous communities have been disproportionately impacted by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in the United States. It is essential to create non-biomedical programs that promote the improvement of their quality of life, relationships, and overall wellbeing. This program will do that through the use of poetry, while also honoring the deep knowledge and oral storytelling tradition of the Ojibwe people of Minnesota. It will contribute to address existing inequalities in Alzheimer's disease and related dementia care."

About Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team:

The mission of the Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team is to support an environment of Team Science to conduct community-based participatory action research on dementia in Indigenous and rural communities with the aim of achieving health equity.

This study is supported by the Alzheimer's Association, through the AARF-D, grant number AARFD-23-1151307. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the Alzheimer's Association.

Media Contact:

Brooke Metz

Communications Manager

bmetz@umn.edu