

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS

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Joe Neil Henderson, Ph.D. 1979, Medical Anthropologist

Dr. Henderson is Professor of Medical Anthropology at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, and Director of the American Indian Diabetes Prevention Center in the College of Public Health, in Oklahoma City. He is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Dr. Henderson was honored by the award of the *Leadership in Prevention for Native Americans, 2006*, by the Loma Linda University School of Public Health and the *Award of Achievement* by the University of Oklahoma, College of Public Health. Dr. Henderson is the former Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* and past-President of the Association for Anthropology and Ger-

ontology. He has authored many articles in the scientific press and is co-author of the texts, *Social and Behavioral Foundations of Public Health* (2001) and, with Maria Vesperi, is co-editor of *The Culture of Long Term Care* (1995). Dr. Henderson's research areas focus on aging, health, and long-term care issues of American Indian people. As a doctoral student of Otto Von Mering, Joe-Neil merges gerontology and other medical health issues in his research:

Over the past five years, I have been conducting research with funds from the Alzheimer's Association on perceptions of etiology, treatment, and disease course of Alzheimer's and related dementias among 10 American

Indian Nations in Oklahoma. Concurrently, I was Co-PI of a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant to study health belief model change regarding diabetes self-care. I was awarded a National Institutes of Health grant from the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities to develop a multi-disciplinary center to study the prevention of diabetes among American Indian populations.

Specifically, my work is on dementia caregiving, biological and cultural influences regarding recognition and treatment of dementia and diabetes, cultural constructions of disease, and community health interventions and education in the context of cultural diversity. I have con-

ducted bio-cultural research on Alzheimer's disease in American Indian tribes, developed Alzheimer's support groups in African-American and Spanish-speaking populations, and conducted geriatric health care education for American Indian providers across the United States.

Currently, I am conducting research into health beliefs and behaviors of gestational diabetes among Oklahoma Choctaw and Chickasaw women. The themes of this research are the prevention of disease, reduction of health disparities, and the building of healthier lives among the youth, adults, and elders in culturally diverse populations.