



Parental Involvement in Reducing Minority Physician Assistant Labor Force Shortage - A Study

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Abstract

- Shortage of minority physician assistants
- Shortage of minority students in PA schools
- Program provided PA learner support targeting minority students and parents
- Results show parental education is essential to securing parental support of students pursuing PA careers



PA Workforce

- PA's provide direct patient care under the supervision of physicians and surgeons
- Usually 3 year program beyond bachelors
- 108,717 certified at the end of 2015, or approximately 34 per 100,000 population
- 35.9% growth from 2010
- Patients are generally satisfied with care provided



Lack of Minority PA's

- Patients prefer to seek care from provider of same ethnicity
- 3.9% African American PA's vs. 13.3% Population
- 6.2% Hispanic PA's vs. 17.6% population



Contributing Factors

- Lack of minorities in PA schools
 - Academic performance
 - Commitments outside of work/school
 - Social and economic deprivation
 - Lack of career opportunity awareness
 - Lack of academic resources and family support for post-secondary education
 - PA schools also lack resources to recruit minority students

Importance of Properly Attract Minority PA Students



- Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistants (ARC-PA) sees growth of PA programs to 273 by 2020
- Need to better attract minority students into these programs to fulfill public needs



Methods

- 2014-2016
- Funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)
- Texas Area Health Education Center East (TAE) and University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB)
- Implemented the Physician Assistant Learner Support (PALS) program



PALS Program Goal

- Recruit African American and Hispanic students from rural, underserved, primarily minority Texas counties
 - Into PA programs
 - To pursue primary care PA careers
 - To return to medically underserved areas (MUA's) or Health Professions Shortage Areas (HSPA's) after training



PALS Program Activities

- TAE developed a consistent curriculum on
 - PA application requirements
 - PA degree requirements
 - Financial aid and career prospects
- Delivered the curriculum to
 - Students
 - Parents
 - High school representatives



PALS Student Activities

- Shadowing practicing PA's
- Shadowing and mentoring by current PA students
- Classroom presentations
- Quarterly TAE and peer support group meetings and community service

PALS Parent/Significant Adult Activities

- Community service
- Parent information (academy) sessions
 - PA application requirements
 - PA degree requirements
 - Financial aid and career prospects
 - Support groups

PALS School Representative Activities

- Meetings with TAE staff and peer support group



Selected Activities

- Vetted based on TAE's 20 years of health careers promotion work and a 2010-2012 research study conducted by TAE
- Consulted by the UTMB's PA program with experience in admitting, advising, teaching and mentoring



Results

- 538 individuals participated in the 2 year program
- 313 K-12 students
- 179 parents/significant adults
- 46 school representatives
- 30% African American, 35% Hispanic, 24% White



Results Continued

- Year One
 - 98% of students indicated satisfaction with activities
 - 66% of students indicated “intent to” apply to PA programs
 - 100% parents indicated satisfaction with activities
 - 100% parents indicated support for students to pursue PA career



Results Continued

- Year Two
 - 99% of students indicated satisfaction with activities
 - 74% of students indicated “intent to” apply to PA programs
 - 98% parents indicated satisfaction with activities
 - 99% parents indicated support for students to pursue PA career

Results – Parent/Significant Adult Outcome

	Year 1 Proposed: Actual	Year 2 Proposed: Actual
Number of parents/significant adults completing a “Parent Academy”	45:12	45:167
% of parents/significant adults who were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with Parent Academies	80%:100%	80%:98%
% of parents/significant adults indicating support of student pursuit of PA career	50%:100%	60%:99%

Results Table Two

	Year 1 Proposed: Actual	Year 2 Proposed: Actual
Number of students participating in quarterly meetings	75:69	75:121
Number of students participating in classroom presentations	75:69	75:121
% of students who were “satisfied” or “very satisfied with TAE activities	80%:98%	90%:99%
% of students indicating “intent to” apply to PA programs	50%:66%	60%:74%

Discussion



- Results indicate
 - PALS program achieved its goals of educating and promoting PA careers to targeted students and parents
 - Program surpassed all pre-established objective measures
 - The value of the program can also be observed based on the vastly improved outcomes from year one to year two
 - Parental education of PA application and degree requirements, financial aid and career prospect is essential to secure parental support for PA career pursuit, and ultimately likely to increase minority program applications

Thank you

- Questions?

