

Meet Antonio Braithwaite, DDS, MPH . . .

Antonio Braithwaite was a shy kid, embarrassed about his crooked teeth. His life changed when he got braces, his newly straight teeth giving him the confidence to be more outgoing. This led Dr. Braithwaite to a career in pediatric dentistry, to help children like his dentist helped him. After enrolling in the University of North Carolina (UNC), he became involved with the Science Enrichment Preparation (SEP) Program, the signature undergraduate program of the North Carolina Health Careers Access Program (NC-HCAP). The SEP Program helped him solidify his background in science, helping him in his classes and on the Dental Admissions Test. The program also allowed him to bond with other minorities with similar goals, providing peer support. Thanks to the support from the SEP Program, Dr. Braithwaite was accepted into every dental school he applied to, and attended UNC on a full academic scholarship. Dr. Braithwaite currently owns Sanford Pediatric Dentistry in rural NC, where he is the only pediatric dentist within four counties.



“I have a strong desire to serve as a positive role model, as there are not a lot of African-American male role models out there. I want to give hope to the little boy who wants to become a physician or dentist, but thinks that he can’t.”

About the Program

- HCOP is authorized under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act. Together with the Centers of Excellence (COE), HCOPs function to increase the representation of minority and disadvantaged students in the health professions.
- NC-HCAP offers a variety of programs for pre-college and college students. These programs work to increase the number of disadvantaged and underrepresented minority students educated, trained and employed in the health professions.
- Since its inception in 1979, almost 900 students have completed the SEP Program. Eighty-six percent of them either have completed or are completing health professions training programs.
- For more information about NC-HCAP, please visit: <http://nc-hcap.unc.edu/>

The Effect of Funding Cuts . . .

- If funding for NC-HCAP was cut, the number of minority and disadvantaged students entering health professions programs would likely decrease. Since the minority community already suffers from a lack of access to care, and they are generally treated by minority health professionals, this will exacerbate the problem in underserved communities.
- NC-HCAP has programs that focus on pre-college students. Without the early opportunity to get involved and learn about possibilities in the health professions, many young minorities might not choose a health professions career. This would negatively impact the health professions pipeline.



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