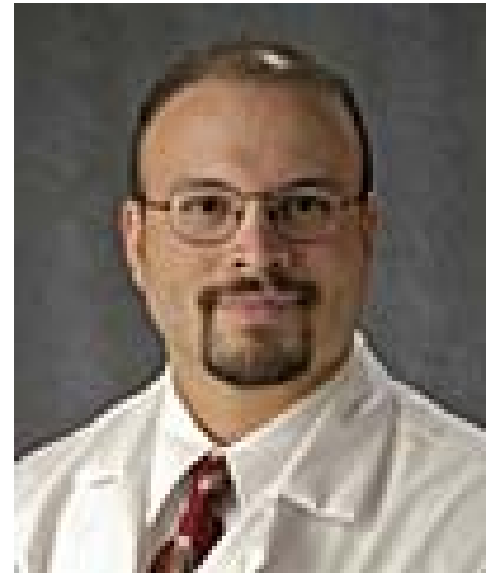


Meet James D. Worriax, MD . . .

Growing up in Pembroke, a small town in one of the poorest counties in North Carolina, James had just about given up on his dream of becoming a doctor when he discovered the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) at the University of North Carolina, Pembroke. There, he met other minorities, including Native Americans like himself, with similar hopes and dreams who were using HCOP to help them reach their goals. Through the program, James volunteered at local clinics and hospitals, found summer jobs to help make ends meet, and participated in a test-prep course for the MCAT, broadcast via satellite from East Carolina University. His score gained him admission to Meharry Medical College’s post-baccalaureate program, where he continued his involvement with HCOP, and soon, James was accepted into Meharry’s five-year medical school track. Today, Dr. Worriax is a rising third-year resident in the Family Medicine program at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington, NC.



“I did well in school and had big dreams, but I was a poor kid with the wrong background – I did not think I had much of a chance to go to medical school ... HCOP not only showed me the opportunities available, it helped me grab hold of them.”

About the HCOP 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.
- The HCOP at the University of North Carolina, Pembroke is designed to address recruitment, preliminary education and health research training, financial aid information dissemination, primary care exposure activities, and development of a more competitive applicant pool. The educational pathway begins with activities at the middle school level, and continues through health professions school.
- The program has served the region for the past 15 years, and has seen 91 students complete their training in the health professions, 80 percent of whom have returned to the region to practice medicine in a range of disciplines.

According to Dr. Worriax . . .

I am a Native American, a member of the Lumbee Tribe. I am the eldest of four children, the son of a chemical plant worker and an assistant school teacher who divorced my senior year in high school. I did well in school and had big dreams, but I was a poor kid with the wrong background – I did not think I had much of a chance to go to medical school. I figured I would end up taking over my father’s air conditioning business – a good job, but not the career I had dreamed about growing up.

Enter HCOP. I started college at UNC-Pembroke in 1994, and eventually received acceptance into Meharry’s five-year medical school track. Throughout medical school, HCOP continued to make a difference. Now, I am part of a program whose goal is to train family doctors to increase the number of primary care physicians in Southeastern NC.

HCOP not only showed me the opportunities available, it helped me grab hold of them. I am a solid reflection of the schools I have attended and the HCOP programs that I have been involved with. From my humble beginnings, to the man I am today, I am one of the many HCOP success stories.



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