



AAMC

Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures®

ASPIRINGDOCS.ORG

An AAMC Campaign to Increase Diversity in Medicine

The Challenge

The faces of our nation's physicians and medical scientists do not reflect our increasingly diverse country.

While racial and ethnic minorities make up 25 percent of the U.S. population, only 12 percent of students graduating from our nation's medical schools are from these groups.

The harsh reality of racial and ethnic disparities in health care and the predicted shortage of U.S. physicians demand a call to action. To provide more culturally competent care and improve access to health care, we must increase diversity in the field of medicine, now more than ever before

It is time for a new approach.

ASPIRINGDOCS.ORG

To raise awareness of the critical need for more diversity in medicine and to encourage well-prepared African American, Latino/a, and Native American students to apply to and enroll in medical school, the AAMC is launching a research-based outreach campaign in the fall of 2006.

A new Web resource, AspiringDocs.org, is the heart of this new campaign. Developed by the AAMC, the site is designed to encourage students to consider a career in medicine and connect them to comprehensive resources with easy-to-understand information about:

- Career options in medicine
- Preparing for the MCAT® examination
- Applying to medical school
- Navigating the admissions process
- Financing a medical education
- Important deadlines.

To provide a dose of inspiration as well as information, the site also features compelling personal profiles of physicians and medical students who are pursuing their dreams in medicine after overcoming a variety of barriers on the road to medical school.

The Online Community

Students who register for the free site also have access to an online community of medical school experts and other aspiring doctors through two key features:

Ask the Experts gives students a unique opportunity to get information and advice about medical school from the AAMC, as well as from admissions and financial aid counselors, prehealth advisors, and other experts from around the country.

Hot Topics lets students meet online to share opinions and exchange information with other aspiring doctors on key subjects of interest.

Comprehensive Outreach at Four College Campuses

AspiringDocs.org, however, is much more than a Web site. It's part of the AAMC's broader effort to spearhead awareness about the need for more diversity in medicine.

In addition to the Web site, a two-year pilot outreach effort is being conducted at four colleges and universities that have large numbers of undergraduate minority biology majors but fewer than expected applicants to medical school: the University of Arizona; California State University, Fresno; the University of Pittsburgh; and Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

Association of
American Medical Colleges

Through print and online advertising in campus media, direct and peer-to-peer communication, career fairs, and other activities, the campaign will create a buzz on these campuses and encourage students to join the campaign's online community.

In addition, special campus events will create valuable opportunities for students to learn first-hand about what it takes to become a physician and to build relationships with nearby medical schools.

Targeted Outreach to Students Considering Medical School

The third leg of the campaign will build a dialogue between the AAMC and students who have participated in the Summer Medical and Dental Education Program (SMDEP), a summer enrichment program, and minority students who have registered to take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT®).

Through regular e-mails and other direct communications from the AAMC, these students will be invited to join their peers in AspiringDocs.org's online community, where they will receive information, support and inspiration to sustain and increase their interest in medical school.

Building on Success

The campaign is grounded in opinion research. Through in-person and online focus groups of African American, Latino/a, and Native American college students and health advisors, effective messages, messengers, and activities for the campaign were identified and tested. In subsequent phases, lessons learned from the Web site and pilot school programs will be integrated with these findings and incorporated into the overall campaign effort, ensuring that students receive the information and support they need to set their sights on medical school.

The Barriers: Why More Minority Students Don't Choose Medicine

According to opinion research conducted by the AAMC in 2003, minority students say several major barriers keep them from applying to medical school:

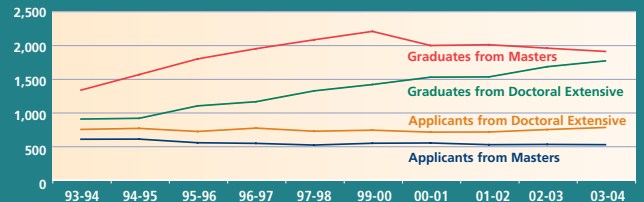
- The *cost* of a medical education
- The *time* it takes to become a physician
- The *demands* of the physician lifestyle

More recent research revealed significant student concerns about the MCAT®, worries about not being accepted to medical school, and uncertainties about whether medicine is the right career for them.

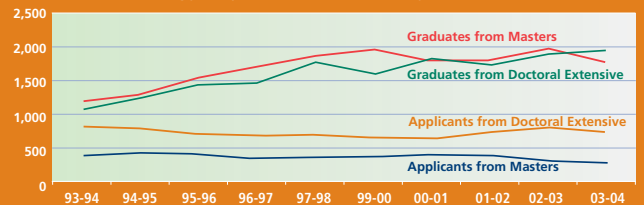
These barriers —real and perceived—appear to be taking a toll: Although more minority students than ever before are majoring in biology (the leading undergraduate major of medical students), the proportion of those students who go on to apply to medical school has not increased accordingly.

The Growing Gap Between Biology Majors and Medical School Applicants

Black Biology Majors and Applicants by Institutional Classification



Hispanic Biology Majors and Applicants by Institutional Classification



Our Commitment

The AAMC is committed to changing the face of medicine. By providing undergraduate minority students with better support, information, and guidance, we hope that AspiringDocs.org will help them say “yes” to a fulfilling career in medicine.

A dose of inspiration through this campaign is an important part of the prescription.

Our message must be that students, with the right information and support, can:

- *Prepare* themselves academically for medical school
- *Afford* medical school
- *Successfully apply* to medical school
- *Succeed* in medical school
- *Enjoy a gratifying career* as physicians and medical scientists
- *Make a major difference* in people's lives and in their communities.