



African American Health Scholars Program

The Need

According to the U.S. Health Workforce Profile (The New York Center for Health Workforce Studies; October 2006), the health workforce comprises nearly 12% of the U.S. workforce. However, diversity among health professionals remains a significant challenge. Although African Americans represent 13% of the total U.S. population, they are only 4% of physicians, 5% of nurses, and 5% of dentists (Missing Persons: Minorities in the Health Professions; A Report of the Sullivan Commission on Diversity in the Healthcare Workforce; September 2004).

The Institute of Medicine recommends increasing the number of minority health professionals as a key strategy to eliminating health disparities. Minority health professionals disproportionately serve minority and other medically underserved populations. Research holds that patients tend to receive better personal care from practitioners of their own race and/or ethnicity. These findings indicate that greater diversity among health professionals will likely lead to improved healthcare delivery and care for underserved populations. It will also increase opportunities for ethnic minority patients to be treated by health care professionals with whom they share a common race, ethnicity or language (The Rationale for Diversity in the Health Professions: A Review of the Evidence; U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Health Resources & Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professions; October 2006).

Our Response

The goal of United Health Foundation's Diverse Scholars Initiative is to increase the number of qualified college graduates entering the health workforce. We believe that investing in the development of health professionals of diverse, multicultural backgrounds will help improve the quality of culturally-proficient health care delivery, close the health disparities gap, and improve long term health outcomes.

Our African American Health Scholars Program is administered through partnerships with a variety of nonprofit organizations. Scholarship applications, requirements and deadlines may vary by organization and are based on criteria established by both the partnering organization and the United Health Foundation. Please visit the following organizations' Web sites for further information and details:

- Auxiliary to the National Medical Association
- Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc.
- Jackie Robinson Foundation
- Magic Johnson Foundation
- Tavis Smiley Foundation
- Thurgood Marshall College Fund
- Tom Joyner Foundation
- UNCF

Learn more about United Health
Foundation's Diverse Scholars Initiative at
<http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org/dsi.html>.



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