

# Explore HEALTH Careers.org

*Do something that matters. For yourself. For others.*

## Take Advantage of Health Career Opportunities for Underrepresented Minority and Low-Income Students

Together, African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans make up over 25 percent of the U.S. population. Yet, according to the Commission on Diversity in the Health Workforce, minorities make up only nine percent of nurses, six percent of physicians, and five percent of dentists.

The statistics are just as bad for most other health care jobs, and the situation is getting worse because the number of minority students training to become health workers is declining.

### Diversity in the health care workforce improves health care for minorities

Dr. Louis Sullivan, founding dean of Morehouse School of Medicine and former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, says the lack of diversity among health providers leads to poorer health among minorities in America.

"The medical evidence is clear. Minorities in the U.S. have an increased incidence of disease and show less favorable health outcomes than whites," says Dr. Sullivan. "Without more diversity in the health workforce our nation's minority populations will continue to suffer."

### Health care training programs are actively recruiting minorities

The first step in increasing diversity among health providers is to "prime the pipeline" by increasing the number of minority students who are studying to become health care workers.

To meet this goal, community colleges, universities and medical schools are actively recruiting minority students into health education programs.

*Missing Persons: Minorities in the Health Professions*, the final report of the Sullivan Commission, recommended several strategies to increase the health care workforce pipeline, including shifting financial aid from student loans

to scholarships, reducing dependency on standardized tests for admission, and enhancing the role of two-year colleges in training the health care workforce.

### New options help students pay for health care training and education

Minority and low-income students who plan to pursue health careers can get financial aid to help pay for school. Local, state and federal government programs provide grants, loans, fellowships, scholarships and loan repayment options, particularly for students who wish to work in medically underserved areas.

ExploreHealthCareers.org offers a database of funding sources for minority and low income students. Search for scholarships, grants and loans by ethnicity, state and field of study.

### Pre-health enrichment programs give students on the job experience

Summer programs, semester programs and internships can help minority and low-income students gain valuable experience working in a professional health care environment. On ExploreHealthCareers.org, students can search for pre-health enrichment programs by region, field and type of program.

"Participating in a pre-health enrichment program is an excellent way to learn what it's like to work in the field," says Henryne Tobias, Project Director for ExploreHealthCareers.org. "You get invaluable experience and personal contacts, and it can increase your chances of being accepted into the health professions program of your dreams."

The health care field offers extensive career opportunities for minority and low-income students. Start exploring your options today at [www.ExploreHealthCareers.org](http://www.ExploreHealthCareers.org).

Source: Missing Persons: Minorities in the Health Professions, A Report of the Sullivan Commission on Diversity in the Healthcare Workforce