

Helping Them Get Started: Funding Entry-Level Allied Health Professions Exam Fees for Pre-Health Students

Project Abstract: The Office of Pre-Health Advising is a newly established/relocated office in the College of Arts and Sciences. We work with students and alumni interested in a variety of health professions, most of which are known for being highly selective. Gaining direct patient experience is often an area that many health professions schools and programs seek out in their applicants, some of whom even require such experience. Gaining these experiences can be challenging, with many requiring costly training and exam fees. Our project seeks to identify underrepresented students and/or students in financial need who have completed training for an entry-level allied health job, but need assistance covering the cost of their exam. Such support can help students get started in an entry-level job in healthcare which can increase their chances of being accepted by a professional school, such as medical school.

Project Summary and Details:

The Office of Pre-Health Advising (OPHA) serves all CU Boulder degree-seeking undergraduate students, regardless of major, and recent undergraduate alumni who intend to enroll in a variety of health professional schools including dentistry, medicine, nursing, physical therapy, pharmacy, physician assistant, and veterinary medicine. OPHA provides counsel on how to prepare to become a strong applicant for these schools, and helps students navigate the application process. In order to be a competitive applicant, students need to maintain high GPAs, gain direct patient experience through work or volunteering, study intensively for entrance exams, and showcase leadership.

Gaining direct patient experience through work or volunteering can be particularly challenging for full-time students, but many manage to accomplish this through volunteer roles or work in entry-level positions. Working in these types of positions is highly valued by healthcare professional schools, with some of them even requiring such work. For example, to become a Physician Assistant, applicants must obtain, on average, 2,000 hours of paid healthcare-relevant experiences. The average hours of experience with patients in last year's admitted students to CU Anschutz' PA program was 2,010 hours (Admissions Statistics, 2022). The PA Program at Red Rocks Community College sheds light on how high these experience hours can go with their last year's average being that of 5,450 hours of paid healthcare-relevant

this program and make it easier to show the need for future funding from the College of Arts & Sciences, which sponsors the office.

References

- Admissions Statistics. 2022. University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus Physician Assistant Program. <https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/physician-assistant-program/prospective-students/admissions-statistics>
- Butta, N., Chang, A.C., Dettling, L. J. 2020, September 28. Disparities in wealth by race and ethnicity in the 2019 survey of consumer finances. Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/disparities-in-wealth-by-race-and-ethnicity-in-the-2019-survey-of-consumer-finances-20200928.html#:~:text=In%20the%202019%20survey%2C%20White,less%20wealth%20than%20White%20families.>
- CU Boulder IDEA Plan. (2019). Inclusion, diversity, and excellence in academics plan. CU Boulder. https://www.colorado.edu/odece/sites/default/files/attached-files/idea_plan_09212020_.pdf
- RRCC FAQ. 2022. Frequently Asked Questions. Red Rocks Community College Physician Assistant Program. <https://www.rrcc.edu/physician-assistant/faq>
- Pipas, L., Audet Jr. R. F., & Brown, L. H. 2002. The value of EMS experience when applying to medical school? National Library of Medicine. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12357566/>
- Startz, D. 2022, April 25. First-generation college students face unique challenges. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2022/04/25/first-generation-college-students-face-unique-challenges/>