

Enhancing Diversity in Nursing: Promoting Nursing as a Career to Underrepresented High School Students



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Introduction

Nurses from minority backgrounds account for only 19.2% of the Registered Nurse (RN) workforce population (Smiley et al., 2018). Thus, the increased need to enhance diversity in nursing is in high demand. Additionally, there has been a recent push among nursing schools to diversify their student bodies. There is a great necessity for the nursing profession to appeal to students from underrepresented groups. Underrepresented groups represent the largest population in the United States. Earlier exposure to the nursing field is a great method to attract underrepresented students and improve academic advancement in the nursing profession.

Objectives

- Foster diversity among future nursing students.
- Educate underrepresented high school students on the nursing profession.
- Promote academic advancement in the nursing profession

Initiatives

The University of South Alabama College of Nursing (USACON) Diversity and Inclusion Council implemented following initiatives to expose and educate underrepresented high school students to the nursing profession:

1. The USACON Diversity and Inclusion Council implemented student recruitment sessions at local high schools where predominantly underrepresented, minority students are enrolled.
2. The USACON Diversity and Inclusion Council hosted live faculty zoom video sessions for local underrepresented, minority high school students who are enrolled in the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA). The zoom sessions give students information about the nursing profession and how to advance in the field of nursing after high school graduation.
3. The USACON Diversity and Inclusion Council plans to host a one-day nursing camp for high school students that will be facilitated by USA CON faculty. The career exploration camp will introduce students to the nursing profession while using interactive experiences, lectures and simulations. The experiences will aim to boost the students' interest in nursing and momentum in college readiness.

Conclusion

Diversity is imperative for the nursing profession. The present lack of diversity in the student population and the nursing workforce inhibits the ability of nursing to achieve high quality patient care (NLN, 2016). As nurses, we strive for a nursing workplace that resembles the diversity of the nation's population. Increasing the number of nurses from different ethnicities will improve healthcare and patient outcomes. These initiatives implemented by the USACON Diversity and Inclusion Council along with other initiatives can help bridge the diversity and inclusion gap seen in the nursing workforce.

Reference

National League for Nurses [NLN]. (2016). *Achieving Diversity and Meaningful Inclusion in Nursing Education*. <http://www.nln.org/docs/default-source/about/vision-statement-achieving-diversity.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

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