

High School and College Students Learn About Health Equity Through HEAL Programs



The Health Equity Achievers & Learners (HEAL) Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) was a six-week summer experience for high school and college students where classes were offered in health equity, anatomy/health science, biostatistics, critical thinking and writing, case study analysis, life and learning skills, and foundations of biological and chemical sciences. Additional professional development courses were offered along with multiple career spotlights from various health care professionals.

High school students participated in a case study analysis course led by **Jamillah McDaniel, PhD, MPH**. With the assistance of MSM students, Dr. McDaniel guided the high school students through examining each case study and how public health research is conducted. Students were required to develop a creative project and a research poster to demonstrate their knowledge and display their findings.

College students participated in a biostatistics course led by [Ernest Alema-Mensah, PhD, MS, D. Min., MDV](#), where he led students in examining statistical data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). All students were asked to pick a topic of interest to research and develop a research poster with data obtained from NHANES.

Educational Outreach and Health Careers Program Manager **Jarrold Lockhart** is a product of pipeline programs and understands how pre-college exposure is crucial to the development

of career interests. By providing an introduction to a wide array of health care careers, Lockhart's goal was to increase interest in his students' current career choice and/or help cultivate a new area of interest that students may not have considered in the past. High school student Alexandria Benyard stated "Thank you, Mr. Lockhart, for allowing me to be a part of this program and for exposing me to new forms of healthcare. To be honest, I did not know much about public health, but being in this program actually made me want to change my profession. I look forward to seeing you again."

All participating students have declared a continued interest in health care professions. Students who have recently graduated high school are all entering college declaring a S.T.E.M. major. Current college students remain interested in medicine or biomedical sciences and have made plans to take the MCAT in the near future. In addition to student interest in a health care profession remaining constant, evaluations indicated that students have shown gains in all areas/concepts.