



Bridging the Gap for Maryland's Healthcare Future

BRIDGE THE GAP

A program created by the Center for a Healthy Maryland



Bridge The Gap

The Bridge the Gap Program is an innovative initiative designed to address the critical shortage of physicians in the healthcare workforce. While the program focuses on expanding opportunities for all aspiring doctors, it also acknowledges the pressing need to increase representation and support for physicians of color. By focusing on mentorship, education, and community engagement, the program aims to inspire, support, and guide underrepresented students from diverse backgrounds toward successful careers in medicine.

Why This Program Matters

The United States is facing a significant shortage of physicians, which is projected to worsen as the population grows and ages. Simultaneously, there is a pronounced gap in the representation of physicians of color, which exacerbates health disparities in underserved communities. Additionally, many underrepresented students face barriers such as:

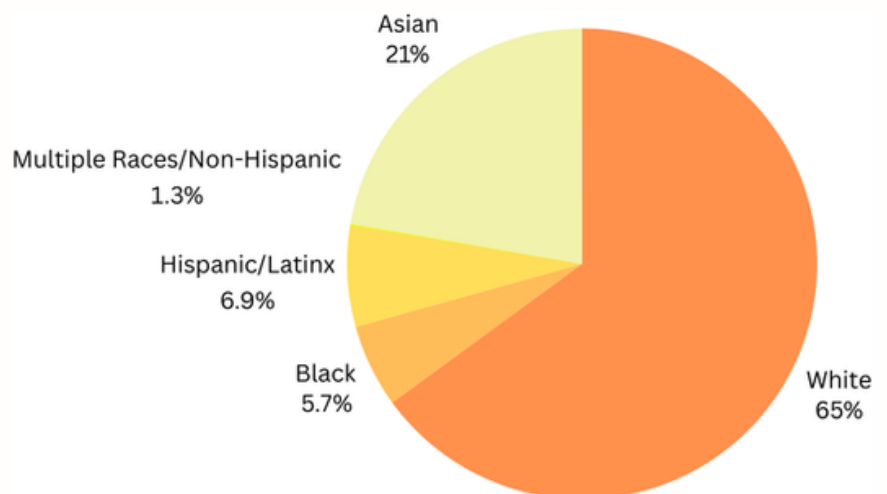
Lack of Role Models: Students without exposure to healthcare professionals in their immediate environment often lack the guidance and inspiration to pursue medical careers.

Socioeconomic Factors: Financial constraints, limited access to quality education, and systemic inequalities create significant hurdles for aspiring doctors from underprivileged backgrounds.

Statistics show:

Only **5% of practicing physicians** are Black or African American, despite making up 13.6% of the U.S. population.

Hispanic and Latin individuals account for only **6% of physicians** but represent 18.9% of the population.



Our Mission

Addressing the overall physician shortage while also creating pathways for underrepresented groups is essential for building a diverse and inclusive healthcare workforce capable of meeting the needs of all communities. Research has shown that approximately 14% of medical students have a parent or family member who is a doctor, and that underrepresented groups do not pursue medical degrees because of a lack of knowledge and exposure to health care careers. Mentoring can help to bridge this gap in knowledge and provide a role model relationship for those who do not have access to social connections that can help students prepare for medical careers.

Bridge the Gap aims to:

Educate: Provide resources and workshops to equip students with the tools they need to excel academically and professionally.

Mentor: Connect students with physicians and healthcare professionals who can offer guidance, inspiration, and support.
Empower: Foster confidence and leadership skills to help participants navigate the challenges of a medical career.

Advocate: Champion systemic changes to reduce barriers for underrepresented groups in medical education and practice.



Our Vision

By bridging the gap, the program aspires to:

- Increase the overall number of students entering medical school to help address the nationwide physician shortage.
- Increase the number of students of color entering medical school by 20% in the next five years.
- Foster a pipeline of diverse medical professionals who are equipped to serve and understand the unique needs of their communities.
- Build a more inclusive healthcare system where every patient feels seen, heard, and valued.

Thank You

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU

