Opportunities A Reality In the Health Professions

BETHESDA, Md. — A first step in creating more black physicians is being taken as a growing number of students enter medical schools.

First-year black enrollment in medical schools, which has risen from three per cent (265 students) in 1963 to seven per cent (879 students) in 1971, is expected to continue climbing with the aid of a new federal incentive known as the Special Health Career Opportunity Grants.

Thirteen programs to recruit and train minority health manpower in various projects in 10 states have received $1.4 million under the grant program thus far, with the total to reach about $5 million this fall.

Federal Effort

The awards represent a major federal effort to help bring about a representation of minorities among health professions at least equal to their representation in the general population.

Schools and organizations received the grants from the Office of Health Manpower Opportunity, a newly formed unit of the Bureau of Health Manpower Education.

The bureau is the major educational component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Support Projects

The Office of Health Manpower Opportunity is concerned primarily with four groups: black Americans, Spanish-surnamed Americans, American Indians and women.

Its grants are to support projects to identify socio-economically disadvantaged students with potential for health training, help them enroll in health schools, assist them in completing training and to support projects to identify and encourage students to return to health manpower shortage areas after completing their training.

The programs will help direct able young students into health careers and will test various methods of recruiting, training, and linking manpower development to respond to some of the worst health problems in the United States.

Dramatic Illustrations

The programs reach into both urban and rural populations where the needs are greatest.

The Mississippi Delta area, for example, furnishes some dramatic illustrations of the urgent need for opening new health career doors to young blacks.

"The need for health manpower in Mississippi cannot be overstated," according to Silas F. Peyton, Ph.D., chairman of the department of science and mathematics at Mississippi Valley State College, Itta Bena.

OPERATION HOP

He will direct Operation HOP (Training Health Occupation Potentials) with a grant of more than $290,000, which will permit the school to recruit about 130 trainees.

These initial trainees would include about 100 undergraduates and some 30 advanced or special trainees, who need help in meeting the requirements for admission to health professions schools.

If the effort is successful, continuation grants could enable the college to take in some 60 additional new students each year, making a total of 310 trainees over a three-year period.

ALMOST DOUBLE

During its 22-year history the school has produced but 67 graduates, who are currently serving in the health professions.

Trainees admitted the first year under the Special Health Career Opportunity grants program would almost double that number.

At the University of Alabama's School of Community and Allied Health Resources, a grant will support another innovative project — Project Black Awareness, under which the school plans to use a team of career counselors to disseminate health information to young blacks throughout the state.

PROJECT EXPANDS

The school will assist Alabama health schools in identifying qualified black applicants. It also will work with premedical and predental students who are turned down by professional schools.

The project expands a program "seeded" with money from the Health Manpower Development Program of the National Urban Coalition.

That program, found during the summer of 1971, that black youths are not aware of most careers in health.

Black Awareness

Blacks constitute approximately 33 per cent of the population in Alabama but less than three per cent of the total number of physicians and dentists in the state.

To find black students strong in sciences, who may want to enter a health career, Project Black Awareness is to work closely with the Alabama Center for Higher Education, a consortium of eight black four-year colleges and with counselors in the state's 18 junior colleges, and counselors and science instructors in high schools.

It will also get health career information to black students in the 8th, 9th, and 10th grades.

Concerted Effort

"A concerted effort has to be mounted to reach these black children before they solidify their career choices," says program director Bernard Kincaid, of the Alabama Center.

In contrast to the projects in Mississippi and Alabama, the strategy of other grant-supported programs centers on a specific career field.

For example, the University of Maryland has a three-phase program to expand opportunities for blacks in pharmacy.

Recruitment Program

Under Dean William J. Kinnard, J., the School of Pharmacy will direct its recruitment program at high schools and colleges throughout the state, with particular emphasis on schools with predominantly black enrollment.

A second phase is aimed at retaining the trainee and will be designed to improve academic skills, monitor a student's academic progress and provide a summer work-study opportunity.

A third phase will attempt to maximize the opportunities and usefulness of the graduating minority student by determining where needs exist for pharmacists and what venture capital sources are available and helping the student solve problems in establishing a new practice.

Admission Procedures

Temple University's School of Medicine, another grantee, will change its admission procedures to increase the enrollment of minority applicants and will recruit minority applicants for medical education by establishing a system of early identification and continuous career development services for minority college students in the Greater Delaware Valley Region.

More than $325,000, the largest amount received by a single institution among the initial grants, went to Meharry Medical College at Nashville, Tenn.

This sum included a grant of $220,229 to support Meharry's biomedical sciences and dental admissions program.

Time Required

The biomedical sciences program, for college students, interested in the health professions, is to counsel qualified students to apply to health professions schools and increase the likelihood of their admission.

It will also attempt to reduce the time required for professional training and improve performance in health professional schools, especially during the crucial first year.

The program offers an intensive eight-week summer session. Students are usually accepted after their freshman year in college and may return for a total of three summers.

Disadvantaged Minority

About 75 disadvantaged minority students will be accepted each summer.

The dental admissions program will identify those disadvantaged students who have applied to Meharry's School of Dentistry, but have not achieved minimum qualification scores on the dental admission test.

It will provide supplemental training, similar to that in the biomedical sciences program, to improve the examination performance of these students.

Admission Test

The program will accept 20 students who have completed required courses for dental school but scored low on the dental admission test.

Meharry also received a $104,791 grant to help launch an undergraduate program in health care administration and planning for its minority students and those at nearby Fisk University and Tennessee State University.

Meharry will administer the program and the other two schools will serve as centers of instruction.

Poor Whites

Grant funds will be used mainly to support the activities of students engaged in recruiting other minority students into the new course.

A special effort will be made to attract Mexican-Americans, Indians, blacks and poor whites, who reside not only in Tennessee but throughout the country.

About 30 students will be enrolled in the first year of the program, 15 at Fisk and 15 at Tennessee State.

Doors Opening

The student totals appear small when measured against the need these programs are designed to meet.

But the programs have a wider significance than the dollars and initial enrollment figures might indicate. The doors are beginning to open at a growing rate.

The Comprehensive Health Manpower Training Act of 1971, which authorized the new grant program, also contains other provisions which aid minority students.

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Drugs Bureau Names Phila. Chief

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Art Lewis, deputy regional director of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs in Detroit, for the past year, has recently been named director of BNDD's Philadelphia Regional Office.

Lewis, who has been fighting the drug war for 16 years, became the first black regional director in the four-year history of BNDD.

The Philadelphia Regional Office covers Pennsylvania and Delaware as well as 10 southern New Jersey counties, an area of more than 27,000 square miles, with a population of more than 16 million.

Job Well Done

In announcing the promotion, BNDD Director John E. Ingersoll cited Lewis for "a job well done" in the Detroit area.

Lewis, 42, is a dedicated, "no nonsense" special agent who has been on the front line in the battle against drug abuse since the 1950's.

Counting his 1957-58 service, this will be his second tour in Philadelphia.

Worked Up

After a two-year stint in the Army, Lewis joined the old Federal Narcotics Bureau in New York in 1953 as a clerk-stenographer.

Working his way up through the ranks as an agent, supervisor and deputy director, Lewis has held key posts in Chicago as well as New York and Detroit.

He first came to Detroit in 1958 and served as an agent there until 1965, returning last August after a tour in Chicago.

Drug Scenes

Married and the father of three children, Lewis is highly regarded by his fellow agents who know him for his sense of humor and compassion.

But when it comes to the drug scene, Lewis is known as a man dedicated to getting the pushers off the street before they ruin more lives.

He is particularly angered when he encounters black people dealing in or abusing drugs.

Principal Target

He feels that blacks are the principal target of heroin pushers. He urges black leaders to stop being afraid to express their anti-drug feelings.

"B-MAD — Blacks Moving Against Dope" — is his favorite suggestion for a bumper sticker.

"Citizens should let drug pushers know they aren't wanted. Apartment owners should refuse to rent to them.

Bar owners should make them unwelcome in their establishments.

Clear Stand

"Schools should take a clear stand and establish definite guidelines to deal with students who push drugs," Lewis said.

He further commented, "We need institutions for the treatment and rehabilitation of addicts similar to the CCC camps of the Roosevelt era."

Lewis continued, "Lexington and Forth Worth drug treatment centers did not work because many addicts won't accept voluntary treatment.

Peer Pressure

"My solution to the drug problem is to remove all addicts from their own areas and their drug contacts, voluntarily or not.

"They should be sent to institutions where they are given the tools for survival and production along with peer pressure."

Looking toward the future, Lewis expressed confidence that BNDD will win the war against drug abuse — citing an unprecedented total of $1.5 billion worth of illicit drugs and narcotics were prevented from reaching the streets during the year ending June, 1972.

Illicit Narcotics

More than $676 million worth of illicit narcotics and dangerous drugs — approximately 10 times the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs' annual budget, was removed from the illegal U.S. market alone by BNDD agents in the last year.

This figure represents a 501 per cent increase over the value seized during 1971, when the total was more than $112 million.

However, the total street value of domestic — foreign BNDD seizures was more than $1.6 billion during this period.

Lewis also indicated the recent shortage of drugs available on the East Coast is a result of the administration's war on drugs.

This shortage, he indicated, is primarily due to the cooperative efforts of federal, state, local and foreign enforcement efforts.

In occupations hiring mostly women workers, replacement needs are high.

On the average, more than 4.5 million job opportunities will arise each year between 1970 and 1980.

JOSEPH F. DOUGLAS, right, associate professor of engineering at the York Campus of the Pennsylvania State University, receives congratulations from Dr. John W. Oswald, president of the University, on his selection to receive the Christian R. and Mary G. Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching. Professor Douglas was one of two University faculty members from throughout the 20-campus system to receive the award for 1972.

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