COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Minority and economically disadvantaged youths who are interested in health professions can receive support and counseling through the newly established Health Careers Opportunity Program of Ohio State University.

"Our major goal is to identify, recruit and retain minority students for health professions," said Richard Redden, project director.

HCOP staff will visit area junior and senior high schools to inform students of career opportunities in the health sciences and explain the academic background necessary to follow these career goals.

Those entering college or professional schools can receive assistance with admissions requirements and procedures as well as counseling on testing, study skills and financial aid.

Among the services offered to students currently pursuing degrees in health sciences areas are academic assistance including tutorial services, counseling, pre-test experiences and workshops. HCOP will also work with faculty and staff as well as student organizations to help increase support services within the professional schools.

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The program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Ohio State's Office of Minority Affairs, School of Allied Medical Professions, and colleges of dentistry, medicine, optometry, pharmacy and veterinary medicine.

For more information on the Health Careers Opportunity Program contact Richard Redden, 571 Health Sciences Library, 376 W. 10th Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43210 or call (614) 422-0198.

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Health career plan will help minorities

By Jalmie Schwartz
Lantern staff writer 4-14-82

A new program geared toward supporting and counseling minority and disadvantaged youths interested in health professions is underway at Ohio State.

The Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) is designed to recruit, encourage and retain minority and disadvantaged students desiring health careers, HCOP Project Director Richard Redden said.

The program, funded by OSU and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is designed to increase the number of minority youths in health careers. Redden equated minority participation in health occupations as being "the only man in an all female occupation, such as nursing."

The College of Medicine has the largest number of minority students, with 7 percent of the total enrollment. The College of Optometry has the smallest number, with one minority student out of 238 total students.

Danny Boone, a recruiter with HCOP, travels to Ohio high schools and junior high schools and gives an audio-visual presentation about the program. The students who appear interested in pursuing health careers are encouraged to seek HCOP's support.

Through the program, students are put in contact with other students with the same interests. Redden calls these student groups "health cadres." By bringing students with similar interests together, they tend to reinforce and communicate ideas, he said.

Interested high school students graduating this spring will have the opportunity to join the Academic Preparatory Program at OSU this summer. This element of HCOP is an 11-week course designed to prepare students for the scientific courses required in the health professions. It also aids students in developing study skills.

"We want to establish a line of communication between our office, the student and the university," Redden said.

HCOP offers no financial support, but students will be counseled on how to get loans.

Redden hopes that minority students already in health sciences at OSU will help in the program by counseling incoming students. Minority students are concerned about other minorities following in their footsteps, he said.

"We all live on what others have done before us," Redden said.

HCOP will launch another program, the Junior and Senior High Principals' Science Scholars Program, in September. School principals will identify students interested in health professions and enroll them in the program. A suggested outline of course work will be offered to the students, and the school counselor will work with the students to evaluate their progress.

People at the HCOP offices will be available to assist the counselors in planning health-related field trips and awards for successful students in the program.

HCOP offices are located on the fifth floor of the Health Sciences library, 376 W. 10th Ave.
Program requires long hours, hard work

By Caroline Alexander
Lantern staff writer

For most students, the idea of taking 12 hours of classes a day would be unthinkable. But for 21 students enrolled this summer in the Health Careers Opportunity Program, the unthinkable is reality.

Their 12 hour days are filled with classes like physics, anatomy, chemistry and statistics, and they must sign a contract stating they will attend all classes and be on time to those classes, said Barbara Cleveland, program assistant for HCOP.

The students, mostly from Ohio State, are not whining about the work involved, rather, they are praising the program.

"I think this is an excellent program, because if you haven't had the classes it prepares you for what's to come. You know what you need to study right now, how to prepare yourself if you don't understand the work, and it gives you a head start on people who don't have the same work that you're having now," said HCOP participant Shawnitra McCants, an OSU sophomore.

Willie Williams, an OSU junior also in the program, said the program helps when looking at future careers.

"The whole program gives us career insight. They let us go to different jobs and let us see what we would do if we were to enter into that particular job field," Williams said.

The academic load is challenging and somewhat strenuous, but it prepares you for what's ahead," Williams said. Bridget Bailey, an OSU sophomore and Mario Sandoval, an OSU junior, agree meeting people in a classroom setting who study related fields is also beneficial.

"We're a small group, so we are always pushing each other to go on. And if you were to just take regular classes at a university, it becomes a lot more difficult to get motivated, and here that's just not true," Sandoval said.

"We're all going in the same direction. We all want to do better and increase our knowledge, so we all want the same things out of this," Bailey said.

During the six-week program, students are provided room and board, which also allows them to get to know each other.

"I think we've kind of developed a family unit because I think we've gotten to know each other well. If someone is having a hard time getting up or getting to class on time we make sure they don't fall behind," McCants said.

The Critical Thinking class, involving group work in the dissection of case studies, overwhelmingly took the vote for the most interesting class in the program.

"When it comes to case studies, a lot of times you feel you've exhausted all your resources and the whole group will sit there all day just kind of beating themselves on the head trying to come up with something. And surprisingly enough, at the last minute, you usually do come up with one of two different ideas," said Acie Cooper, an OSU junior.

"Think it's interesting because you're struggling; you're frustrated, but once you finally solve it you feel motivated to keep on going," Sandoval said.

"When you are working as a group everyone brings something to the center, so you can get together as a group and diagnose what the patient may have. You learn something different from everyone involved," Bailey said.

Students get experience in allied health program

By Caroline Alexander
Lantern staff writer

The Health Careers Opportunity Program gives ethnic-minority or financially disadvantaged students interested in allied medicine a chance they might not otherwise receive.

The HCOP was designed to give students the opportunity to experience a heavy course load, attend workshops related to stress management, and obtain experience in the School of Allied Medical Professions, said Ruth Dennis-Phillips, program manager.

Enrollment is open to ethnic minorities or financially disadvantaged students attending two- or four-year colleges who are studying allied health, said Barbara Cleveland, program assistant for HCOP.

The program was developed because of the limited number of ethnic minority students enrolling in the School of Allied Medical Professions, Dennis-Phillips said.

Biomedical communications, circulation technology, medical dietetics, physical therapy, medical technology and respiratory therapy are just a few of the allied health careers available, Phillips said.

"When you're talking about the Allied Medical Professions as a whole, a lot of times people don't know what they are. These students get firsthand experience on finding out," Cleveland said.

Cleveland said the teachers involved are mostly retired, and work in the program for the pure joy of teaching.

Robert Walter, who teaches anatomy and physiology in the program, said the students involved in HCOP really are not any different from other students.

"I think the students have the most difficulty with the medical terminology. They're intimidated by the Latin-sounding words. If they can get over their initial fear, I think they'll do all right," Walter said.

Students enrolled in HCOP must sign a contract stating they will attend all classes and be on time to these classes, Cleveland said.

"If the student is unable to attend a class due to illness he or she will make someone aware in HCOP immediately," Cleveland said.

"We have never had to do anything to a student for not following the contract. ... Yes, they do drag in, because they are tired. We understand that," Cleveland said.