Institute of Health Careers: A Jackson Public School JROTC Summer Camp at William Carey University

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Challenge/Issue

- Mississippi is plagued by some of the highest rates in the country of diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and other poor health outcomes
- Much of the state is also faced with significant health disparities, restricted access to medical care, and a shortage of health professionals
- Innovative programs are needed to expand the healthcare workforce to meet the growing needs of the state, as well as promote positive change for a healthier Mississippi

Objectives

The STEM-inspired summer camp, which debuted in 2015, was created to introduce high school students to the world of healthcare and its associated career opportunities. The summer camp program encourages:
- Self-discovery of personal strengths and areas for growth
- Creation of personal and professional life goals
- Development of interpersonal communication skills
- Enhancement of team collaboration skills
- Cultivation of leadership abilities
- Recognition of the benefits of good citizenship
- Better comprehension of private, state, federal, and military scholarships and other funding opportunities to aid with the expense of higher education
- Strengthened understanding of the college and professional school admission process
- Increased awareness of the diversity of professions within the world of healthcare and the steps required to attain a degree or certification in those professions
- Enhanced knowledge of osteopathic medicine and its philosophy, including osteopathic manipulative treatment

Innovative Approach

- Cadre pre-enrolled 60 cadets from the 7 high schools in the Jackson Public School District
- Cadets were transported to William Carey University for the 5-day residential summer camp
- The summer camp was designed and directed by a faculty member at the College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Interactive lectures were provided by health professionals:
  - Nursing
  - Music Therapy
  - Athletic Training
  - Palliative Care
  - Physical Therapy
  - Pharmacy
  - Dentistry
  - Social Work
  - Public Health
  - Laboratory Technology
  - Emergency Services
  - Clinical Psychology
  - Nutrition & Food Service
- Demonstrations and hands-on activities were offered:
  - Cadaver Dissection
  - Medical Imaging
  - Physical Therapy
  - Music Therapy
  - Laboratory Microscopy
  - Simulation Technology
  - Emergency First Aid
  - Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment
- College of Osteopathic Medicine and College of Health Sciences faculty along with healthcare professionals from the community delivered all of the educational content

Results

- 44 cadets completed the summer camp in 2018
- Approximately 25 hours of healthcare-related activities were delivered during the 5-day summer camp
- Other summer camp activities included: physical training, a hospital tour, and social events
- Cadets were inspired and equipped by the summer camp to pursue diverse healthcare careers in an effort to meet the growing workforce needs of Mississippi
- Cadets were challenged to become leaders in their communities, where they are encouraged to serve as forces of change for a healthier Mississippi