A Data-Driven Statewide Approach to Build & Support the Health Workforce Needed to Improve Health Outcomes

ABSTRACT
A diverse health workforce that is well-distributed across the state improves the chances of racial concordance, 1 allowing patients to establish relationships with providers who share common backgrounds and have similar life experiences. Box 1 describes additional benefits. Yet, the racial and ethnic diversity of the health workforce diversity does not typically match the diversity of the population.2,3

South Carolina AHEC builds and supports the healthcare workforce South Carolina needs for every community to have access to diverse, high-quality, patient-focused care. We use a combination of health workforce data, population health indicators and program evaluation in a data-driven approach to identify areas of need and build programs to support health workforce development and practice. This presentation will describe the diversity of South Carolina’s health workforce and discuss strategies for implementing a series of statewide health equity programming through the implementation of ongoing, dialogue-based health equity and social justice programs.

Box 1. Why is this important?
There are deep disparities in health care.

- Compared to non-Hispanic White people, non-Hispanic Black people are 2.3 times more likely to be hospitalized for lower limb amputations (2017).4
- 2.1 times more likely to receive late or no prenatal care (2018)5
- 5 times more likely to be hospitalized for asthma (children ages 2-17) (2017)6

A diverse health workforce can help.
- A racially and ethnically diverse health workforce:
  - Improves provider-patient communication
  - Enhances patient outcomes and satisfaction and access to care for underserved populations
  - Reduces disparities in healthcare
  - Provides better experiences for students in the health professions7,9

A diverse health workforce that is well-distributed across the state improves the chances of racial concordance, allowing patients to establish relationships with providers who share common backgrounds and have similar life experiences.

Box 2. Does the diversity of the state’s health workforce match the diversity of the state’s population?
The racial diversity of the health workforce in South Carolina does not match the racial diversity of the state’s population. However, health professionals in South Carolina’s rural counties are generally more diverse than health professionals in urban counties.

Box 3. What can we do?
We all have a part to play in helping to address health inequities.

- Enhance health careers pipeline programs
- Address admissions policies
- Improve diversity and support health professions faculty
- Training faculty and administrators on harmful bias and discrimination in clinical education
- Antiracism Collaborative

Health interventions must address racism to eliminate health disparities and achieve social justice.

There are 8 areas of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEJ) efforts10:
1. Communication & Dissemination
2. Education & Development
3. Global Matters
4. History
5. Liaison & Partnership
6. Organizational Excellence
7. Policy & Legislation

Sample strategies through education and professional development

- Asset Based Approach to Program Development
  - approach to program development which considers local assets as the foundational building blocks11

REFERENCES

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