

A CALL FOR A MILITARY PIPELINE PROGRAM IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN THE INTERSERVICE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

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DISCLOSURES

- The presenters have no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to this program/presentation.
- The authors' views are theirs and do not reflect the official policy of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify barriers to underrepresented minorities (URMs) matriculation into healthcare education
- Identify strategies for enabling URMs matriculation into healthcare education



INTRODUCTION

- Census figures of the United States vibrantly paints a picture of a nation becoming more racially and ethnically diverse
- As the country has become more diverse, so too has the US Military
- Unfortunately, current trends of diversification have not translated to a more diverse PA profession



BACKGROUND

- Racial and ethnic concordance between healthcare professionals and their patients is associated with:
 - a. Greater levels of patient satisfaction
 - b. Increased treatment compliance
 - c. More effective cultural competency



BACKGROUND

- A more diverse healthcare workforce has been shown to:
 - a. Improve access to healthcare for underserved, minority and ethnic communities
 - b. Enrich the pool of healthcare managers
 - c. Improve medical research agendas and innovations
 - d. Help with the recruitment of URM healthcare education faculty and students

URMs absence from health professions directly correlates and contributes to healthcare disparities among minorities



DEMOGRAPHICS

- Out of 970 PAs in the Army Active, Reserve and National Guard Inventory:

RACE/ETHNICITY	PERCENTAGE	#
LATINX	6.6	64
AFRICAN AMERICAN	3.6	35
NATIVE AMERICAN	0.4	4



IPAP DEMOGRAPHICS

- The Interservice Physician Assistant Program (IPAP) produces approximately **170 PAs** annually across all services

RACE/ETHNICITY	PERCENTAGE MATRICULATING 2019	# OF NEW PAs
LATINX	7.6	12
AFRICAN AMERICAN	3.9	6
NATIVE AMERICAN	0.5	0



PURPOSE

- Briefly summarize the existing literature relevant to the persistent shortage of URM^s in the PA profession
- Review IPAP policies, publications, and practices regarding recruitment, admission and retention
- Discuss effective strategies used to overcome barriers to increasing the number of URM^s into the PA profession



STUDY METHODOLOGY

- 1) This research will serve as a process improvement action
- 2) Review of relevant scholarly literature that discussed barriers minorities face in attempting to matriculate into the PA producing education programs
- 3) Review of relevant literature that discussed tools to overcome barriers that minorities face attempting to matriculate into PA producing programs
- 4) Researchers collected documents, regulations, presentations, polices, scholarly literature produced by the IPAP, IPAP archived records, **and semi-structured interviews with key informants within the IPAP/military PA leadership communities**



STUDY METHODOLOGY

5) A qualitative conceptual content analysis was employed to engage the information. Each of the documents were treated as its own unit of data and was systematically coded and analyzed using four thematic questions:

- a. What are the explicit or implicit (existence) themes communicated by the IPAP community in regards to the attributes IPAP values in a PA student body
- b. Does IPAP value racial and ethnic diversity in its PA student body
- c. What efforts does IPAP make to recruit a racially and ethnically diverse student body
- d. What efforts does IPAP make to admit a racially and ethnically diverse student body



BARRIERS TO URM_s MATRICULATING INTO PA PRODUCING PROGRAMS

- Cost of higher education
- Lack of academic preparation
- Admission requirements, coupled with high numbers of applicants
- Lack of minority faculty and mentors
- Stereotype threat
- Lack of exposure to healthcare professions



IPAP RECRUITMENT

- Over the last 10 years there have been on average of 300 applicants
- The IPAP Program Manager in conjunction with the US Army Recruiting Command is responsible for
 - a. Recruitment strategies that ensure high-quality Soldiers participate in IPAP
 - b. Provides information briefs at Army installations world wide
 - c. Collects and prepares Soldier's application packets for IPAP selection



IPAP SELECTION

- Applies a Whole Person Concept to their selection of students
- Places a high priority on an applicant's character, experience and career accomplishments
- Minimum overall GPA of 2.5; science GPA of 3.0
- Minimum SAT score is 1000
- Minimum of 60 hours of college credit



PRELIMINARY CONTENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

- What are the explicit or implicit (existence) themes communicated by the IPAP community in regards to the attributes IPAP values in a PA student body

- **The IPAP student is often:**

- A chronologically older male that has military and leadership experience

- High marks on performance evaluations

- Above average physical fitness score

- Strong letter of intent that demonstrates their writing capabilities

- Strong letters or recommendation from more than one PA



PRELIMINARY CONTENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

- What are the explicit or implicit (existence) themes communicated by the IPAP community in regards to the attributes IPAP values in a PA student body

- **The IPAP student :**

- Has obtained close to a bachelor's degree

- Has a background in healthcare

- A GPA of 3.47

- A composite SAT score of 1246



PRELIMINARY CONTENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

- What efforts does IPAP make to recruit a racially and ethnically diverse student body
- What efforts does IPAP make to admit a racially and ethnically diverse student body

- The concept or theme of racial and ethnicity diversity can not be identified in any of recruitment policies, presentations, regulations or published articles obtained thus far
- The term and concept ethnic minority is referenced only once as specific guidance for the selection board composition
- The concept of diversity has only been referenced in the terms of gender, maturity and experience of the IPAP in comparison to civilian PA producing programs



DISCUSSION

- The IPAP has a holistic application process
- The number of applicants relative to available slots suggests IPAP may be “impacted”
- The absence of race or ethnicity in any of the content reviewed suggests that IPAP has a race-neutral recruitment process



RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to increase the applicant pool and enrollment of underrepresented minorities in the IPAP and PA area of concentration, the United States Army should create a formal pipeline program



EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF URM_s IN PA PRODUCING PROGRAMS

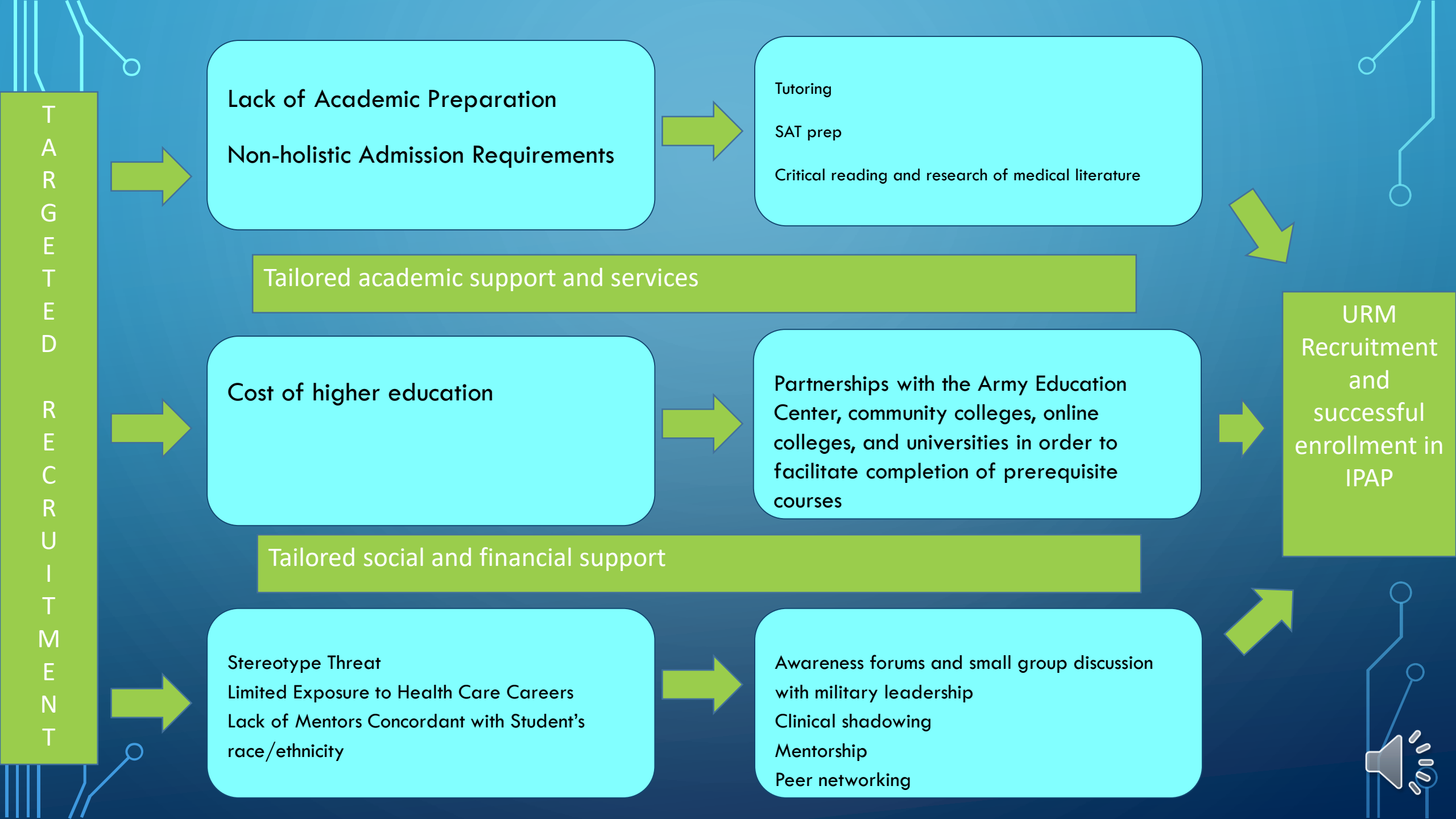
- Intentional recruitment efforts of underrepresented minorities
- Academic support
- Adequate financial support
- Social support



COMPONENTS OF AN IPAP PIPELINE PROGRAM

- Recruitment arm: stated mission to recruit URM students and diversifying the IPAP
- Development arm: provides academic and social support to prospective IPAP applicants
- Retention arm: provides tools (mentoring, peer support, curriculum) for sustaining students as they navigate the different phases of IPAP





TAKE HOME POINTS

- A racial and ethnically diverse PA community enriches the profession's capabilities and enlarges the profession's capacities
- There are academic, financial and social barriers URM students disproportionately experience that contribute to the lack of racial and ethnic diversity
- A multifaceted approach, such as a pipeline program, is needed to increase the number of URM students in PA producing programs



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