

# Medical Education for Diverse Students (M.E.D.S.) Program Guide

## **Cause for Action:**

- As of 2014, the overall graduation rate in the Syracuse City School District was 56%, compared with a state standard of 80%. The percent of graduates in Syracuse who will go on to some type of college is 71%, compared with 81% County-wide.
- In addition, the high school dropout rate in Syracuse was 11% for the 2015-2016 school year, compared to 4% County-wide.
- In Syracuse, 80.2% of adults aged 25 and older have a high school education or higher and 26.4% have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Educational attainment is recognized as an important social determinant of health.

## **Where is the program?**

The program is conducted monthly at SUNY Upstate Medical University, 766 Irving Ave Syracuse, NY 13210 through the academic year.

## **Who does the M.E.D.S. program serve?**

The program serves junior and senior level students enrolled in either Henninger High School or Fowler High School in the Syracuse City School District.

## **How does the program serve this population?**

The program provides hands-on instruction in medical/basic sciences, public health, and healthcare career exploration on location at Upstate Medical University and University Hospital. Local high school students have the opportunity to explore Upstate's campus and experience where research and healthcare take place and also interact with our students. They are also introduced to individuals in the various healthcare professions allowing them to ask questions about professional roles and responsibilities as well as career path.

## **What would I do as a student?**

Upstate students plan and implement informative lessons in medical/basic science, public health and healthcare career opportunities, and become mentors to the participants over the course of the one-year program.

## **How often would I serve?**

The program currently provides 6 sessions (and may expand to 8) between September and March. Upstate students participating in the MEDS program are expected to participate in these sessions by leading learning stations. They are also expected to attend preparatory meetings prior to each session.

**What are the community impacts?**

By mentoring and exposing students early about careers in medicine and healthcare, the MEDS Program hopes to increase interest in healthcare professions among high school students in the Syracuse City School District, while encouraging continued high school attendance and eventual graduation. . Research shows that programs with a mentoring component can be used as an intervention strategy to produce improved student outcomes especially in youth with behavioral issues or high environmental risk<sup>2</sup> (ie. violence, low educational outcomes, drug abuse, and bullying).