

**SOUTH CAROLINA COALITIONS FOR HEALTH CAREERS  
BUILDING A LASTING CONTRIBUTION**

## **PARENT & STUDENT HEALTH CAREER FORUMS**

**Developing Region:** Mid-Carolina

**Targeted Audience:** Students and parents of students at the middle and high school levels

### **Project Goals:**

- Increase the awareness of targeted audience about health professions opportunities
- Increase the knowledge level of students and parents about the requirements and available pathways to pursue a health profession

### **Project Summary:**

The Parent & Student Health Career Forum is a venue to inform and educate students at the middle and high school levels and their parents about health professions and opportunities within the field.

Planning Steps:

1. Determine target audience:
  - Education level: middle school, high school, college
  - Expressed career interests
  - References from health careers counselors
2. Consider topics appropriate for target audience:
  - Role models and play acting
  - Diversity of options and opportunities
  - Required courses and years of schooling
  - Costs and eventual income ranges
3. Enlist participation of students currently enrolled in health professions schools because:
  - They are closer in age
  - They may share backgrounds/experiences similar to those of target audience
  - Their perception as 'near' peers may increase interest and awareness that a particular career is possible
  - They help facilitate interactive participation in workshop(s) exercises
4. Recruit health care practitioners or educators who are:
  - Enthusiastic about their chosen field
  - Have demonstrated the ability to be engaging speakers in lecture or workshop settings
  - Can convey their passion and spark the interest of young people
5. Administrative requirements:
  - Choose an appropriate venue and have refreshments available
  - Provide evaluation forms to assess workshop effectiveness
  - Provide 'take home' tools or some sort of giveaway that makes health careers and the specific program memorable

### **Project Outcomes (to date):**

- Two (2) sessions have been facilitated:
  - ❖ The Spring Forum targeted high school students and parents. South Carolina Health Career Cluster Pathways, workforce needs and financial aid served as session topics. *65 attendees*
  - ❖ The Fall Forum targeted middle school students and parents. Medical careers were explored through sessions facilitated by USC medical students and local practicing professionals. *43 attendees*
- Promotion was primarily facilitated through school based career specialists with registrations accepted by phone and fax. Success was measured by attendance

### **Best Practices/Lessons Learned:**

- Utilizing practitioners and students who grew up in the region helped to emphasize the ability of attending students who are enrolled in the same schools that they can graduate and be successful in the field
- The provision of boxed dinners supported attendance at the early evening sessions
- Providing specific responsibilities to planning committee members helps to make the project more manageable
- The attendance was larger when radio spots were used, but the partnership with the school-based career specialists works well also

### **Sustainability Actions:**

- Grant proposal submitted
- Coalition members providing in-kind services for supplies and facility
- Exploring the possibility of identifying corporate sponsors

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