Welcome to Supporting students interested in health professions careers presented by the University of California.
To start our presentation today, we are going to ask for your engagement in an activity called Facts & Myths. We have six statements about entering the health professions field and we are going to ask you to indicate in the Zoom poll whether you think each one is a FACT or MYTH.
MYTH. While some students will go on to work with a variety of different populations in the health field, other students will want to work with specific populations: for example, with children, seniors, people with Disabilities, those with limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking, those with pharmacological dependency issues. Your students may be interested in veterinary sciences - that too is a health profession! Strong interpersonal skills are important in this field, but if a student wants to work with a specific population, demonstrating that specific motivation through research or shadowing is highly beneficial both for the student to continue to learn about their desired career path, and for the admissions process.
Fact or myth? #2

Students don’t need to be science majors to become healthcare professionals.

FACT. Although many students applying to health programs have majored in the biological or health sciences, there is no preference or competitive advantage for any majors over others in the admissions process, including medical school. Every year students with majors in the social sciences, humanities, chemistry and engineering are admitted to health profession programs. Having this diversity of perspectives and backgrounds in the classroom is critical in the learning process! So the most important thing for a student to do is to complete the required preparatory course work for their continued education in college and to maintain a high GPA. We advise undergraduate students to select an academic major that interests them and allows them flexibility in taking the required pre-med or health professional school courses.
MYTH. While some health professions programs have differing policies about accepting community college courses, most programs will accept or recognize pre-health requirements a student takes at their community college. We know that some community college students can be resistant to taking any of their prerequisite health professions courses prior to transferring to a four-year institution, but we recommend that you do encourage students to complete some of their coursework while at community college, especially non-STEM requirements.
MYTH. Those applying to health profession programs will be expected to show that they “know what they are getting into” and that they have explored the field, know the role physicians or specialists play, and are clear on why they want to go into the health field.

Arranging for a “shadowing” experience – for example, where a pre-health student can closely observe a physician in action to become knowledgeable as to the role that person plays in the health field – can be invaluable and can help a student solidify their understanding of both the work and their motivation for entering that role.

It is essential that a pre-health student demonstrate their motivation to wanting to enter the health field, but there are many ways to provide that evidence; it does not even need be limited to medically related activities. Some students tutor or work with children or senior citizens in a variety of educational or social service settings. The setting does not create an issue for the admissions process – it’s all about how the student discusses that experience – how they’ve grown, what they’ve learned, and how it’s impacted their goals – within their application.
Fact or myth? #5

Research hours can only be conducted in a lab.

MYTH. While research is often a highly valuable feature in an application, it is probably more accurate to say that health professions programs seek students who give evidence of their scholarly interests, have a desire to go beyond what is taught in the classroom, and who will be life-long learners. A number of strong applicants to health professions programs have not done research, but have stood out in other ways. Research also does not need to be in any particular field or have a direct relationship to medicine. While many pre-health students pursue research in the life sciences, others focus their research attention on the social sciences or humanities as well as the physical sciences. So there are a lot of ways to “do research” or demonstrate a desire to learn and we recommend students get involved in what they are passionate about. Going to a lab out of a sense of obligation or in hopes it will somehow create a stronger application is likely to be counterproductive and be a source of frustration to both the student and their research supervisor.
Fact or myth? #6

Letters of recommendation can only be written by STEM faculty.

MYTH. Applying to a health profession program normally involves the submission of several letters of evaluation typically written by professors and others who have taught the applicant. While some schools do not specify from whom the letters should come, often, the applicant will be asked to provide letters from faculty who can speak to the student’s involvement in both STEM courses AND non-STEM courses. Additional letters from employers, research and/or volunteer supervisors may also be asked for or an option for students. Getting letters from those who have taught and know the applicant well and can provide a comprehensive and thorough evaluation of a student should be the top priority.
Thank you for participating in our facts and myths activity.

In this session, the following topics will be covered: Pathways to becoming a healthcare professional; 2. How the University of California can support and prepare students to enter a health professions program; 3. Health professions programs academic and clinical requirements; 4. Resources and final advice to move students forward.
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When working with students, pose the question, “How do you know you’re interested in pursuing a career in the health professions?” The suggestions listed on this slide are a few ways we can assist students in their decision-making.
The path students take to a health professions program can be as unique and dynamic as the students who are applying themselves. Although there are a few common paths that many students take, the route and rate of how students prepare and apply is completely determined by the student's personal journey and experiences. This is a general flowchart of what many pre-health students go through while preparing throughout college. Please use this reference, and others like it, as a general guideline for major milestones.

College:
- Apply to summer programs and meet with an advisor.
- Participate in enrichment programs; volunteer or intern in the medical field.
- Attend pre-health meetings and events and work with the pre-health advisors.
- Completion of certain required courses.
- Research the MCAT exam or other relevant graduate-level exams and prepare (Spring dates are the most common).
- Prepare for the medical school/health professional school application process, including secondary applications from medical schools and interviews.
Preparing for a career in the health professions is not just about learning facts. It is about learning and mastering skills and about abilities and values that help a student throughout their life. While there are many resources to learn about the process for preparing and applying to health professions programs, it’s important that students consult with the pre-health advising staff who have extensive experience guiding students as they prepare for graduate/professional programs. It is the student’s responsibility, however, to initiate relationships with faculty and staff who serve as valuable resources. These relationships should be established early in the students’ undergraduate career.

**Strong Academics:**
- Although pre-health students should be active inside and outside of the classroom, the reality is that health professions schools are competitive to matriculate in to. Maintaining a competitive GPA is an important step on the path to a health career, but what exactly is a "competitive" GPA?
  - Did you know that students have more than one GPA? In addition to their traditional or cumulative GPA, students also have a major GPA, science GPA, upper-division GPA, etc. For most health professions, it is important to understand what the cumulative, science, and upper-division GPAs are and how they differ from each other.
    - The **Cumulative GPA** calculates *all coursework that a student takes* and converts the letter grades into a numeric average. The cumulative GPA will include science classes, humanities classes, labs, seminars, or any other course taken and received a letter grade in.
    - Within the cumulative GPA is the **Science GPA** (also referred to as the BCPM GPA while applying to medical school in this example). The science GPA *only calculates classes that have been classified as a science or math course*. For pre-
medical students, this GPA is also called the BCPM GPA, or their biology, chemistry, physics, and math GPA. The courses that calculate into the science GPA courses are included while calculating the cumulative GPA; however, not all of the courses that are included in the cumulative GPA are included in the science GPA. Not all health professions use the "BCPM" model to distinguish the courses that are included in the science GPA. Some health professions, like Pharmacy, will further break down the science GPA into individual science subject GPAs (i.e. a biology GPA, chemistry GPA, etc.).

- Health professional schools will consider the cumulative GPA in their evaluation of the applicant, however, they will often use the science GPA when critically examining the applicant’s competitiveness in their program.

Meaningful Experiences:

- Experience in the field is important! We recommend that students get some exposure to healthcare work while in college.
- We also recommend that they have a consistent record of good work in human service internships or volunteer experiences, and that they keep a record of their involvement and work so they can refer to it while applying for health professional schools.
- We also recommend that students develop the kinds of relationships with their professors and others that will enable them to get good recommendations.

Personal Narrative:

- Students should have a clear understanding of their motivations for choosing a healthcare profession and the ability to articulate this in writing and in interviews. Being able to draw connections between past experiences and future goals is a large part of applying to medical school or other kinds of graduate-level programs, so students are encouraged to think about how their past experiences have helped build the skills, passion, or goals they hold today that will help them be successful in medical school. Not all of these experiences have to be within a healthcare-specific environment, but the student should be intentional about the connections they make between their past experiences and the academic and professional goals they hope to achieve.
Each UC campus has a variety of opportunities. Here are just a few:

**UC Berkeley** - Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program - This program allows students in as early as their first year to work with faculty on cutting edge research projects, of which Berkeley is well known for. Within the program, students can deepen their knowledge and skills in areas of their interests, while building their portfolio and skillset with research work.

**UC Davis** - Med Prep Program - Similar to a “LEAD Pre-Health Program”, free year long, meeting one Saturday a month from October through May, for those planning to take MCAT and/or apply to medical school. Primarily for second or third years, students/alumni fee, non-UC Davis $5.

**UC Irvine** - Postbaccaluareate Program Meetings (PB Meetings) - Support with medical entrance exams. The PB Meetings are an essential integrated part of our unique post baccalaureate program. All post baccalaureate students in the program are required to participate in meetings, as determined by your program advisor. Group meetings encourage active team base learning in a supportive environment, while receiving unique guidance and resources to prepare them for the application process. All sessions are designed to help strengthen a student’s ability to prepare for a well-rounded application to a health profession of their choice.

**UC Merced** - On-campus Employment (Peer Health Educator) - Peer Health Educators foster a campus community that encourages positive health behaviors supportive of UC Merced students' academic success and well-being during their collegiate experience. This is achieved by using available data and following a primary prevention philosophy in their efforts to provide health education, train student leaders, advocate for change and promote health equity. Experiences gained through this opportunity provide students the pre-professional skills that successful pre-health applicants demonstrate.
UC Riverside - Connections to paid experiences—Scribing, Physical Therapy Aide, EMT, Phlebotomist, etc.; UCR SOM Pathway Programs - FPL Summer Program and California Medicine Scholars Program at UCR, UCSF Fresno, UCSD, UC Davis

Having a part-time job can be a great way to get “hands-on” experience in a clinical setting. Health professions programs love to see students have engaging clinical experiences, and some health professions programs such as physician assistant (PA) programs, require students to have paid clinical experience before applying to a PA program.

NEW Pathway Program for Community College Students: California Medicine Scholars Program at UCR, UCSF Fresno, UCSD, UC Davis: https://california-medicine.org/regional-hubs-of-healthcare-opportunity/
Pre-health advising occurs across UC campuses via a variety of departments/units/advising centers. Check out each UC campus on how to access pre-health advising services. To access their advising services, students must be enrolled at a UC campus, however, they may have online resources and services that anyone may utilize (such as recorded workshops via their YouTube Channel or other social media platforms).
Guidance in becoming a competitive applicant
- Getting involved in volunteer work.
- Shadowing professionals in healthcare.
- Connecting with professionals.
- Encouraging students to visit a UC campus of interest for specific pre-health programming and opportunities.
- Mapping out courses ahead of time to allow time for involvement in clinical and non-clinical activities.

Workshops and events every term
- Look for pre-health programs that offer informational sessions or other programming for most up to date requirements.
- This will give students the option to explore and decide what major is a best fit for them.
- CCC applicant- Look for TAG to guarantee admissions.

Course selection and planning
- Help students look for programs that assist with advising on the best routes for graduation.
- Encourage students to meet regularly with specific pre-health advisors.
- Map out your timeline early to adjust to changes along the way.

Assistance throughout application process
- Many resources offered through the UC system.
- Resources in CCC to gain experience and volunteer early to realize if a career in health is the best option for you.
- Get an early start in volunteering and programs to understand commitment of the career.

Connection to opportunities
- A broad sub section but you make your connections based on your interest. Refer to slide on all UC pathways to Prehealth.
Getting started on preparing for a career in the health professions can be overwhelming. Students should start with these steps.

1. **Search online**
   - Students should call/email inquiring about setting up an informational interview – include important information
     - **Name**, University of California student, major, and health professions interest
     - Offer to share their resume, LinkedIn profile, etc.

2. **Shadow practitioners where they are currently volunteering**

3. **After each experience, students should take time to reflect on what they observed, how they felt, and whether they want to continue**
Health professions programs/schools require prerequisite courses in preparation for admission to advanced clinical health science study. Most health professions programs require a foundation of coursework in areas of biology, chemistry, physics, math/statistics, as well as behavioral and social sciences. This slide is to be used as a guide and framework; however, it’s encouraged that students look at programs/schools they are interested in applying to for any additional academic requirements.

We also know some students participate in certificate and vocational programs, which are great for experience and learning, however, note that some of those courses are non-transferable.
AP/IB: Scores of 3, 4 or 5 on AP exams or 5, 6 or 7 on IB Higher Level exams give units. They may not always be equivalent to a course. Important to check at each individual UC for course equivalency. Sometimes it’s best to complete the entire series at the community college/university to get the letter grade.

Grades: “C” grades are passing, however, since GPA is a factor when applying to health professions programs, students should be doing the best they can in their courses. Depending on the student’s major to transfer, they may be required to complete specific courses with a specific GPA, so it’s important for students to work with a UC rep and their counselor to ensure grades and courses are being met.

Retaking courses: Retaking courses is okay, we know it happens. A student can only repeat D or F grades and must take the exact same class for it to count as a repeat. Once the student repeats the course, the old grade will not be calculated into the GPA for transfer to a UC. At the time of application for professional school, the ALL grades will be recalculated using all grades, including Ds/Fs to calculate the BCPM GPA.

Just a couple notes to reiterate when working with students:
1) Please advise students, to the best of their ability, to complete a course series at the same institution.
2) Please use ASSIST.
3) Encourage students to work with UC campuses to assist them until the transfer process is complete and then work with a health professions advisor as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transition into a future health professions program.
The University of California is proud to be a leader in healthcare education in areas of medicine, dentistry, nursing, public health and more. Shown here are a variety of health professions at 7/10 campuses. Let’s not forget that veterinary science is also a health profession!
UC campuses prepare students to apply to health professions programs/schools in the UC system as well as across the state and country.
Developing a timeline is critical to planning for success. In planning for health professions study at the graduate/professional level, most students are applying at the end of their junior or senior year of college. The application process from start to close is roughly between nine-12 months. It’s becoming increasingly popular to have one or more gap years between graduating with a baccalaureate degree and entering a health professions program.
Excellent and vetted resources for pre-health advisors and students. Nearly all of these resources are free.
There are four key areas to move students forward.

When working with your students:

- Create a plan: When does your student plan on taking degree and pre-health courses? Are they planning to take a gap year? When do they plan to take the entrance exam (i.e. MCAT)?
- Encourage students to get involved: On campus employment, clubs/organizations or to shadow/volunteer
- Coursework: Encouraging students to do well academically and using resources on campus to study, organize, etc.
- Encouraging your students to ask for help when needed!
Thank you for attending Supporting students interested in health professions careers presented by the University of California. Have a great year ahead!