

## Session

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### **Public Health Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Predominantly Black Universities: Roles, Responsibilities, and Research**

**Yalanda Barner**, Jackson State University

*APHA 2022 Annual Meeting and Expo*

#### **Abstract**

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#### **Building health workforce capacity to address health inequities**

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*APHA 2022 Annual Meeting and Expo*

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been underfunded since their inception 1, yet provide vital resources, education, and personnel to the workforce in the United States and around the world. HBCU and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) have recently undertaken initiatives to build the maternal, child, and family health educational capacity at these institutions, where the public health workforce is being trained.

Diversifying the health workforce is a vital means of changing the trajectory of maternal and infant mortality disparities that have continued to worsen for decades. In early 2021, members of the Consortium of African American Public Health Programs (CAAPHP) formed a committee to address maternal, child, and family health across historically black institutions, creating the HAT-MCH. The HBCU Alliance Team for Maternal, Child, and Family Health (HAT-MCH) is comprised of ten HBCUs and PBIs focusing on excellence for Maternal, Child, and Family Health using innovation to achieve health equity by incorporating maternal, child, and family health programs at the collaborating institutions.

HBCUs live, work, teach, and serve within the communities most impacted by disparities in maternal and infant mortality. They are positioned and connected within the very communities most impacted by health disparities, while simultaneously training the diverse workforce who can provide culturally relevant, concurrent health care.

CAAPHP was established in 1999 is an organization that strives to advocate for health equity and social justice through academic research and service to community. CAAPHP aims to advance public health and health education through promotion of public health programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Faculty members from HAT-MCH institutions have collaborated on several funding proposals to build capacity within and across the HBCU network. Collaborations on research, workforce development, and curriculum development

#### **References**

1. For HBCUs Cheated Out Of Billions, Bomb Threats Are The Latest Indignity. (2022, February 1). Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2022/02/01/for-hbcus-cheated-out-of-billions-bomb-threats-are-latest-indignity/?sh=1530651d640c>

#### **Abstract**

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#### **Reimagining Historically Black Colleges and Universities as sites of Black reproductive justice**

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The purpose of this study was to examine the reproductive health challenges of Black women collegians and their recommendations for how HBCUs can support their reproductive health needs.

Through a Sister Circle focus group and a survey, this mixed methods study centered the experiences and perspectives of 19 Black women students in the health sciences as they navigate both the health system and the academy while attempting to preserve their reproductive health.

This study found that Black women students have an intersectional experience that impacts their ability to support their reproductive health, with challenges driven primarily by a lack of access to quality healthcare within the health system and on campus. The Black women collegians in this study have a vision of reproductive justice that includes reclaiming their reproductive rights and autonomy, and a holistic understanding of the health and environmental factors they and their families need to thrive. Black woman students prioritized access to transparent information, comprehensive health care including reproductive health services and mental health resources on campus, health insurance, DEI policies, tangible supports for pregnant and parenting students and issues of safety and sexual assault as most important to supporting their reproductive health.

The findings are discussed through the theoretical frameworks of Black Feminist Thought, Reproductive Justice and Critical Race Theory. A promising framework for the inclusion of reproductive health in models for Black student success is presented. Implications of the findings and recommendations are discussed for the fields of public health and higher education.

## Abstract

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### **Experiential Learning: Perceptions of African American Healthcare Students Connecting With the Community**

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**BACKGROUND:** The training of the next generation of healthcare professionals requires various types of learning experiences for students to master the skills and knowledge needed to be entire the workforce. Experiential learning serves as a viable option for the educational process. “Experiential learning exists when a personally responsible participant cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally processes knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes in a learning situation characterized by a high level of active involvement (Hoover and Whitehead, 1975, p. 25).

Chicago State University College of Health Sciences is dedicated to educating and increasing the number of underrepresented minorities in the health science professions. The college requires all students seeking admission to complete a semester-long experiential learning course. This course provides the link between theory and practice in authentic settings such as community-based organizations. The course also expands the traditional classroom walls, providing active and cooperative learning opportunities, interdisciplinary projects, and multicultural experiences grounded in local community issues that animate the teaching/ learning processes.

**METHODS:** A review of student reflection papers from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022 was conducted to determine themes of student perceptions and thoughts about experiential learning and community engagement utilizing a phenomenological design.

**RESULTS:** There were several critical themes identified, such as the importance of being an effective communicator, exhibiting compassion and empathy, and understanding the root causes of health inequalities.

**CONCLUSION:** Participation of African American students in experiential learning opportunities is beneficial to improving their critical thinking skills, social and communication skills, and gaining better insight into the role that healthcare providers play in community settings. Students can also understand the importance of collaboration between themselves, colleges/universities, and community residents.

## Abstract

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**Title: HeaLTHY HBCU- A Mixed-Method Study Prioritizing Oral Health at Historically Black Colleges**

## **and Universities**

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#### **Background:**

Oral health is a key indicator of overall health, well-being, and quality of life. In the U.S. oral health disparities are profound for Black people. Causes are multifactorial and reflect a legacy of racism and social inequities. This study prioritizes Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to assess student access and appraisal of their oral health and oral health services (OHS).

#### **Methodology:**

This mixed-methods study triangulates results from a content analysis of 101 HBCU websites, a web-based survey that included 72 questions culturally tailored and tested with students who also led the recruitment and dissemination process, and three focus groups of HBCU students to provide space to share experiences and expectations of oral health and OHS.

#### **Results:**

Preliminary findings reveal limited availability of OHS on HBCU campuses. Despite OHS availability (n=2 campuses), 47% of current students were unaware of the accessibility. A focus group participant described his experience learning about the OHS on his campus as being “too late and “a missed opportunity for oral health support . 72% of respondents ( $\bar{x}=20$ ) were covered by parent’s health insurance. Approximately 11% had not received any oral health care in the past 2.5 years and 38% had at least one root canal.

#### **Conclusion:**

While education can unlock valuable resources, e.g. higher salaried jobs and access to insurance, that facilitate better oral health outcomes, HBCUs have the unique opportunity to prioritize and amplify access to oral health education and services as a major factor in achieving health equity.

