

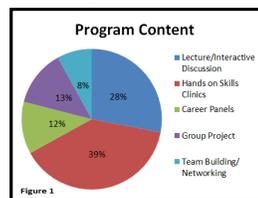
A Six Year Journey with Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego's Medical Academy Program

Background:

With a rapidly changing healthcare landscape, San Diego has a growing need for medical professionals who are trained and prepared to enter the job market with knowledge and compassion. Established in 2014, the Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego (RCHSD) Medical Academy (MA) was founded to address this need as well as provide financial support for FACES for the Future (FACES), a school-based healthcare career pathways program. MA and FACES are facilitated by the Center for Healthier Communities (CHC) at RCHSD.

Program Description:

MA is a learning and growth opportunity with goals to 1) Expand knowledge in the breadth and depth of a myriad of healthcare opportunities, 2) Experience practical skills in an immersive, hands-on format and 3) Explore real-life career paths and clinical experiences through direct connections with clinical specialists. MA is supported by more than 125 faculty from RCHSD and other healthcare facilities. Program goals are met through; lectures/interactive discussions, hands-on skills clinics, group projects, career panels and team building/networking activities (Figure 1). Established primarily for high school students, participants are recruited through the MA website (<https://sdhealthscholars.org/about-medical-academy/>), email, word of mouth, and social media. College-aged students are not eligible to apply to the summer session.

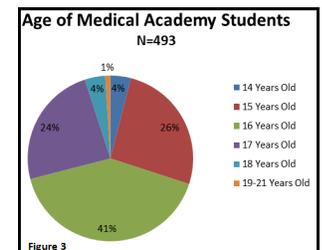
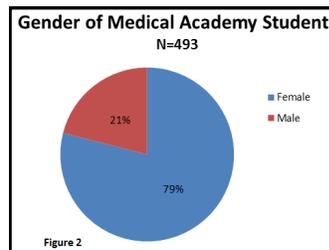


Program Evaluation:

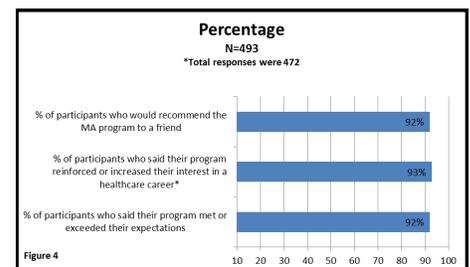
To assess program outcomes and impact, daily and final evaluations are completed by participants. It is from these evaluations, as well as local projected career potential that weekend session topics were chosen and implemented in 2018: mental/behavioral health, nursing, surgery and cardiology. Additionally, student, alumni, staff and faculty feedback inform quality improvement efforts for program content and logistics.

Popularity and Growth: Since its inception, MA has grown from one summer session to two, and four weekend sessions throughout the year. In this time, it also expanded from 36 participants in 2014, to 493

participants through March 2020, including its foundational summer program and weekend academies. The program participants' reported genders are 79% female and 21% male (Figure 2). Their ages span from 14 to 21 years old and are detailed below (Figure 3). Further, 3% (n=15) of MA participants travelled to RCHSD from out of state, representing Arizona, Utah, Florida, Illinois, Colorado and Nevada, as well as internationally.



Program Satisfaction: Per the final evaluation for each rotation, 93% of students reported MA reinforced and/or increased their interest in pursuing a healthcare career; 92% said they would recommend the program to a friend; and 92% of students reported that the MA met or exceeded their expectations (Figure 4). While an alumni survey was conducted in 2019, the response rate was not strong enough to assess post-high school, long-term impact specific to actual college studies and career choices.



The Journey Continues:

MA provides a unique and highly sought-after opportunity for high school and early college students across the region and beyond. It is clear from the feedback that programming is impactful. Next steps should include:

- 1) Implementing a robust, consistent impact survey aimed at high school graduates, enrolled in college to assess health career decisions and post graduate employment;
- 2) Increasing efforts to recruit males to provide more gender balance;
- 3) Developing a new career-specific weekend intensive;
- 4) Procuring funding for scholarships.