

University of Colorado School of Medicine
Diversity Documentary: A Cohort of Resilience

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Abstract.

Background.

The percentages of matriculating underrepresented minority (URM) students are not meeting the demand for a diverse physician workforce (Lett et al., 2019). Several solutions have been proposed, including “pipeline programs” to inspire the next generation early in their schooling (Smith et al., 2009). Few have created documentaries following the journeys of URM students from start to finish of medical school, and we hypothesize there are significant benefits to creating a documentary for both medical student cohorts and URM premed students.

Description.

This is a four-person team of medical students: one technology expert and three interviewers. The subjects for the documentary consisted of nine students from the University of Colorado School of Medicine (CUSOM) class of 2024. Our subjects for the documentary include the only two Black men in the class, a Colorado native Latinx woman, a student with cerebral palsy, a Black mother, a Korean American veteran of the U.S. Army, a daughter of Vietnamese refugees supporting a sister with a schizophrenia diagnosis, a gay Muslim man, and a student of color from rural America. Most documentary subjects are first-generation college and graduate school students. Subjects and interviewers were chosen from the CUSOM class of 2024 and paired together for four years throughout their medical school training. Due to the pandemic, interviews were conducted either in-person or over Zoom depending on various safety and travel limitations throughout the four years of medical school.

Goals:

- 1.) To Foster a sense of community amongst the cohort.
- 2.) Document the emotions and experiences of URM medical students throughout their training.
- 3.) Collect feedback from URM students for the CUSOM in video form.
- 4.) Showcase the completed film to aspiring medical students from URM backgrounds with hopes of informing and increasing their desire to pursue a career in medicine or healthcare.

Conclusions.

Emerging themes from our project include imposter syndrome, trauma (as a result of immigration status, veteran status, race, poverty, medical training), classism, frustration with systemic healthcare issues, and implicit bias in patient care. In addition, over time, we have noticed that the process of creating our documentary has offered many opportunities to foster a sense of community among subjects and interviewers. We believe it has ameliorated some feelings of isolation given the setting of online medical school courses during a global pandemic.

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