

## **Strategies to Strengthen Academic Success Among High School Students Interested in Pursuing Nursing as a Career**

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### **Abstract**

Understanding the many roadblocks faced by diverse, underserved students, it is essential to give students access to the needed tools for academic and career success. The Edmondson-Westside High School (EWS) and Frederick Douglas High School offer career technology education (CTE) for certified nursing assistants, surgical technicians, and emergency medical technicians. The Morgan State University Nursing Program's (MSUNP) Preparing English, Math, and Science Scholars Project and University of Maryland School of Nursing Ready for College Program will provide students in Allied Health Pathways with academic support, college-readiness services, and workplace skills to increase employability. Academic support activities will include strategies to strengthen reading comprehension, math, science, writing, test-taking skills, didactic instruction, and clinical practice. The workplace curriculum is designed to enhance students' skills in leadership, communication, team building, work ethics, entrepreneurship, and practical training. Families and students will be engaged through virtual workshops, clinical simulations, college campus tours, and access to college-level career counselors and human resources staff. This will help ensure college admission, financial aid, and employment requirements are met. Additional academic and mentoring supports will be provided in individual and small group settings via Blackboard Collaborate and Zoom.

In late 2019, 20 EWS allied health students attended MSUNP for a Shared Learning Day with the senior nursing students. Interactive learning experiences included head-to-toe assessment skills and a code management simulation scenario. Prior to this cooperative learning experience, MSUNP faculty worked directly with the high school students to deliver course instruction that served as foundational learning for the interactive didactic and clinical exercises. Students explored the roles and individual responsibilities in a code management event. A key purpose for the shared-learning activity was to accelerate students' confidence and preparation to function as a team member while providing care.

The ultimate goal of engaging students in CTE programs is to inspire more high school graduates to pursue professional nursing careers. The advantage of attracting CTE allied health students to professional nursing degrees and careers is the students' advanced training and education in fundamentals of nursing. Additionally, health occupation curricula can be designed to model undergraduate nursing curriculum, providing an opportunity for students to earn general

education college credit. Developing allied health college-readiness curricula and work practice environments will potentially increase the pool of qualified nursing school candidates.