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The Medical Futures Program: how one regional medical campus educates its community

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 Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine Inova Campus

Background

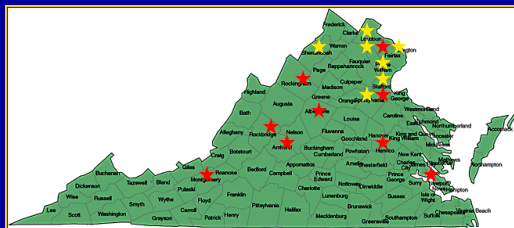
The Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine Inova Campus has extensive ties to the northern Virginia community. The **Medical Futures Program** was created to provide valuable information regarding medical school admissions and current physician workforce issues to high school and university students, their parents, and guests.

Since its inception in 2010, the program has grown to two annual events, both held on the Inova Campus. The program features an interactive medical student panel, faculty speakers, and extensive Q/A. Additional time for a facility tour, medical simulation demonstration, and refreshments round out the program agenda.

Target Audience

High school and university students, parents, and career counselors from the state of Virginia

Figure 1: Counties represented by program attendees



yellow=high school students, red=university students

Key Components

The Medical Futures Program could easily be recreated at other campuses. With these key components, any institution could tailor a similar program to suit the needs of their community:



Outcomes

- Educated **383 students, parents, and career counselors** over the course of 3 programs
- Reached students at both high school and university levels, from all over the state
- Provided much-needed education on primary care shortages and physician workforce issues
- Established our campus as an excellent resource for the state of Virginia

Discussion

As a community service project, the Medical Futures Program is an extremely successful way to reach hundreds of local students, their parents, and career counselors.

As a service to the medical profession, it provides an excellent opportunity to reach those same participants while they are learning about their main interest: the future of medicine and how to become a part of it as the physicians of tomorrow.

By reaching out to the future medical school candidates through this program, the VCU School of Medicine Inova Campus sets itself apart as a resource in the community, region, and state. The program's success is due largely to the enthusiasm of medical student applicants, the program content, and dynamic speakers.

Similar programs would be excellent for establishing other regional medical campuses as resources within their communities.

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