

# Mobilizing Physician Assistants: Educational and Professional Outreach to Underserved Urban Communities

Bruza-Augatis, M. MS, PA-C, Rodriguez, V. MSPA, PA-C

## Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to create a conduit for educational and professional exchange between the Seton Hall University Physician Assistant (PA) Program and underrepresented high school (H.S.) students in the greater northern New Jersey region. Furthermore, the program's goal was to introduce Seton Hall PA students to the need for outreach to underserved communities with hope for future impact to engender a diversity pipeline into the PA profession and University and increase the presence of clinicians in underserved urban communities.

## Methodology:

Two Seton Hall PA faculty and 19 PA students mentored 25 H.S. students in small, hands-on, group workshops during each of the first 4 sessions to learn about some of the skills that PAs apply in clinical practice.

### Clinical skills taught included:

- measuring blood pressure
- applying ACE bandages
- learning knot-tying
- eye and ear exam

### Other activities included:

- Presentation on the PA profession and education criteria to become a PA.
- PA students shared academic and clinical experiences with the high school students.
- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) director from Seton Hall presented academic and financial resources to assist students to attend a university.
- At the final session, H.S. students were provided a Certificate of Completion as a representation of their practical knowledge gained and as a resume-builder for both college applications and professional opportunities.



Figure 1: Hands on Skill Workshops

## Results:

To evaluate the success of the program, high school students and PA students completed pre and post surveys about their participation in the program. Some of the results for these surveys are listed below:

	Seton Hall PA Students Nr. of participants = 19		High School Students Nr. of participants = 27	
	Pre-survey results	Post-survey results*	Pre-survey results*	Post-survey results*
Planning to work in underserved community hospital or clinic	33%*	91.7%*		
Mentoring younger students interested in a career in a healthcare field.	44.5%**	75%**		
			Pursuing a career as a PA	25%
			Interested to work in underserved community hospital or clinic	not able
				81.50%
* Liked scale: "extremely likely" or "somewhat likely"			Liked scale: "very interested" and "extremely interested"	
** Liked scale: "much more confident"			75% were "extremely interested" in a healthcare career	

Table 1. Pre and post survey results for PA students and High School students

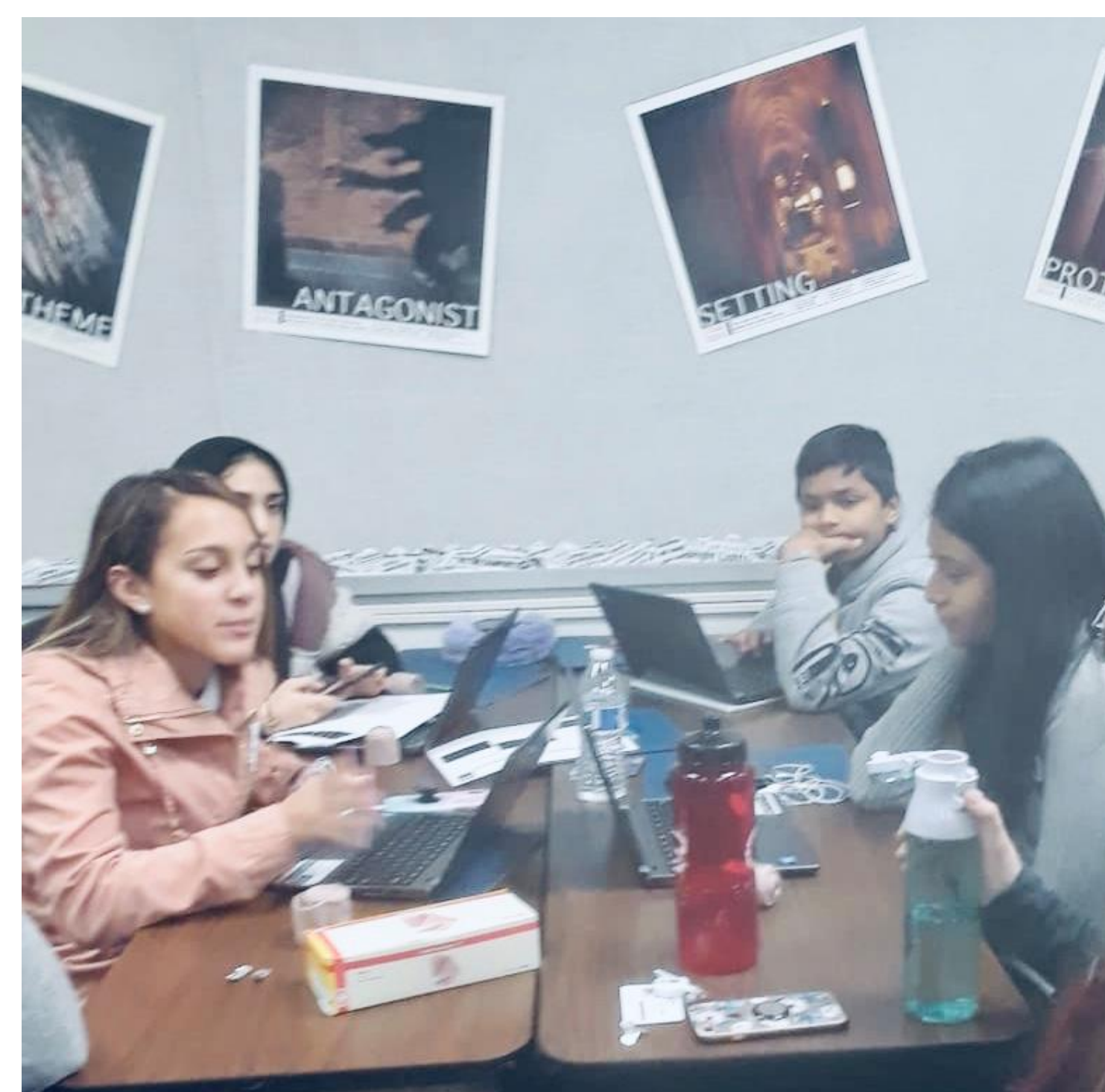


Figure 2. Mentorship.

## Conclusions:

As a result of this project, we developed a partnership with Clifton High School. Due to the enthusiastic positive feedback provided directly by PA students and H.S. students, we look forward to continuing this program. In continued partnership with the local H.S., we intend to sustain this outreach project for the following academic year. In addition, peer students (PA students in this case) who mentor younger students from underrepresented backgrounds seem to develop an understanding of mentorship and are more likely to express increase in interest in working in medically underserved communities where access to healthcare is often limited due to socioeconomic inequality, educational disparities, and shortages of healthcare providers.



Figure 3. Student Poster Presentations

## References

Begley K, Haddad AR, Christensen C, Lust E; A health education program for underserved community youth led by health professions students. Am J Pharm Educ. 2009; 72 (6):98. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19885067>. Accessed November 1, 2017.

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