LVHN offers several educational programs to introduce young students to the possibility of a health care career. Ever wonder if these programs help create the next generation of health care providers? Well, these two stories prove that they do.

From an Emerging Health Professionals student to a SELECT student

Joseph Sipko has returned home to the Lehigh Valley. This past month, along with 44 University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine SELECT program classmates, he started his third year of medical school back at LVHN, where he started his post-secondary educational journey seven years ago.

An alum of LVHN’s Emerging Health Professionals (EHP) program, which was named the 2018 Program of the Year by the Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Education, Sipko graduated from The Pennsylvania State University with a degree in Biobehavioral Health and decided he wanted to become a physician. A native of Whitehall, Sipko decided on the SELECT program because he wanted to serve the community that raised him. “I was exposed to the program during my time in EHP and was inspired by the SELECT medical students I met while at LVHN,” he says. “I couldn’t ask for a better pairing between USF and LVHN for my medical education.”

Sipko says the best part about SELECT is the amazing faculty and clinicians at USF and LVHN. His journey through medical school has been full of memorable experiences, but for him, the strong mentorship and coaching is really what sets SELECT apart from other programs.

Reflecting on why he chose to pursue medicine, Sipko credits the EHP program for solidifying his career aspirations of becoming a physician. He commends the LVHN physicians for being great teachers and mentors. “After only a few days shadowing in the hospital, I knew medicine was right for me and set my mind on becoming a physician,” he says. “I truly believe I would not be in medical school without the EHP program. The early exposure to medicine through shadowing the clinicians at LVHN sparked my interest and inspired me to pursue a career in medicine.”
Sipko has advice for future EHP and other youth program participants. “Take advantage of the opportunity. Shadow as many different specialties as you can. Use college classes to hone your study skills before college. And of course have fun,” he says. Sipko especially wants future health care professionals to know EHP is such a unique opportunity for high school students in the Lehigh Valley that is not available to most high school students throughout the country. “I’m so thankful for my experience in the EHP program,” he says.

For more information about LVHN’s educational programs, visit the EHP page on LVHN.org.

**LVHN Research Scholar turned SELECT student**

LVHN’s youth programs continue to have long-lasting effects on alumni. Tara Stansbury is a Research Scholar program alum and currently a third-year medical student in SELECT. The Lehigh University graduate is now using the skills she honed from the Research Scholar program to guide her through medical school and beyond.

As she decided on the medical school she would attend for four years, she thought back on her experience with LVHN and chose SELECT. “I felt the curriculum would help me become a more well-rounded physician,” she says. “The curriculum emphasizes leadership and interpersonal skills that are not typically taught in medical school.” She is enjoying her third year in the program and recently finished her first rotation. Based on her experience during that rotation, Stansbury has an initial interest in becoming a surgeon. “A patient presents with a problem, you fix it and they are on their way to recovery,” she says. However, as she is going through her rotations she is keeping an open mind on the specific field of medicine she will practice.

Stansbury participated in the Research Scholar program in the summer between her junior and senior year, and credits the experience with giving her an introduction to medical research.

Stansbury’s project “Does the Effectiveness of Thymoglobulin as Measured by T-Cell Depletion Correlate with the Incidence of Acute Rejection Post Kidney Transplant?” was accepted to a national conference. “I was able to spend nearly every day shadowing a cardiothoracic surgeon at LVHN,” she says. “This was an incredible experience and helped me realize that becoming a doctor was the best choice for me.”

Originally from Allentown, Stansbury spends most of her spare time with friends, reading and going to the beach with her family, so she is glad to be back in the area. Because the Research Scholar program solidified her career goals of becoming a physician, her advice to the current and future Research Scholars is, “Use this opportunity to learn as much as you can. It is a really unique experience for college students, so make the most of your summer.”

The Research Scholar Program is funded in part by The Dorothy Rider Pool Health Care Trust. High school and college programs are a key foundation of our health care pipeline and lead to future providers in our health network. If you or your department are interested in learning more about the programs offered or how you can be involved in working with students, please contact
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