

BPMC COMPLETES NINTH SESSION OF THE HIPPOCRATES CIRCLE PROGRAM

May 18, 2010

On May 10, BPMC hosted a graduation ceremony at the Courtyard in Baldwin Park for students participating in the Hippocrates Circle Program (HCP), a youth mentoring program that encourages students to pursue careers as a physician. The 20 graduates from Sierra Vista Jr. High attended along with family and friends. The activity served as the culmination of the program that is part of Kaiser Permanente's commitment to building a diverse work force.

Through a number of collaborative educational activities, this region-wide program provides awareness to students from under-represented communities that a career as a physician is possible.

Thanks to the efforts of Maria Carrasco, MD, Family Medicine, Montebello, who provides leadership; and Alex Lopez, manager, Linguistic & Cultural Services, who coordinates the program; the BPMC HCP recently completed its ninth session. To date, 185 (7th and 8th grade) students have participated in the program. All from BP Unified School District middle schools including Jones, Holland, Olive, and Sierra Vista.

During the three-month program, physicians from Baldwin Park, Diamond Bar, Montebello, and West Covina work closely with the students serving as mentors. The program features several interactive venues between students and physicians including the kick off where physicians shared their experiences and provided insight into how students can begin to work toward a career in medicine. During the second session, students visited BPMC where they received hands-on demonstrations in Emergency Services, General Surgery, Pediatrics, Orthopedics, and Radiology. They also participated in a Sim-Man demonstration that taught students how to take a pulse, check breathing, and heart rates. The Sim-Man is a life-size computerized mannequin that teaches clinical and decision making skills during realistic patient care scenarios.

Kudos to our physician mentors: John Bigley, MD, medical director; Maria Carrasco, MD, Family Medicine, Montebello; Victor Cheng, MD, Family Medicine, Diamond Bar; Jack Chou, MD, Family Medicine, Baldwin Park; Mark Feng, MD, Urology, Baldwin Park; and Rafael Serna, MD, Family Medicine, West Covina.

"The program gives local students a structured overview of what it takes to become a physician," says Dr. Carrasco. "This is made possible thanks to the efforts of our physician mentors who make the program a success by volunteering their time and sharing personal experiences with the students. We are extremely grateful to this wonderful group of physicians."

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Students also toured a medical school campus where they met medical students. Parents and students took part in a session focused on preparing for college and how to pay for it—as essential part of planning a career path.

The program culminated with the graduation ceremony. Jose Avalos, MD, served as the motivational speaker. Dr. Avalos is in his third year of residency at the KP Los Angeles Family Medicine Residency Program where he serves as chief resident and chair of the hospital House Staff committee. He is two-time recipient of the Kaiser Permanente Oliver Goldsmith, MD, award for the promotion and advancement of culturally responsive care and was recently awarded the American Academy of Family Physicians Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education. He will continue at KP LA next year to complete a fellowship in Community Medicine and faculty development. He is the son of two immigrant parents from Jalisco, Mexico, and was raised in South Central Los Angeles. KP physician mentors were also in attendance.

“The HCP program is unique because of the age group that we are targeting and the direct physician involvement, which is crucial to the program’s success,” adds Lopez. “The willingness to share their stories of struggle and success resonates with the students. The message from the docs is one of overcoming obstacles, perseverance, and focus.”

If you are a physician who is interested in sharing your story, would like to inspire and motivate future SCPMG physicians, please consider participating in upcoming sessions of HCP. For more information, contact Alex Lopez.