

Health Center Spotlight

Health Center Innovation: Building Workforce Pipelines with Youth Engagement

Health & Sciences Charter School by Urban Health Plan



Website:

<https://www.urbanhealthplan.org/>



Contact Information:

<https://www.urbanhealthplan.org/need-help-ask-a-question/>

Dr. Richard Izquierdo from Urban Health Plan, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Bronx, NY, recognized the medical staff didn't reflect the predominantly black and brown patients who came to the health center. This sparked his idea to start a charter school specifically for health and science. He envisioned that this school would draw students from the local community, and they could learn about health care professions and gain the necessary skills to serve the medical needs of their neighbors.

Dr. Izquierdo knew he could not do this work alone. He encouraged the leadership at Urban Health Plan to create a separate non-profit as the foundation to fund the school. He partnered with the Dean of the local City University of New York (CUNY) Medical School, Montefiore Medical Center, Hunts Point Alliance for Children, the Sophie Davis Biomedical School and others, to share knowledge and resources. He developed relationships with the Department of Education for New York City, as well as local elected officials. These strategic relationships, fostered by the vision, tenacity, and leadership of Dr. Izquierdo, enabled Urban Health Plan to craft a successful charter school application, approved by the City of New York.

With city and state funds, as well as grants from private funders, the Charter School with grades 6-12 opened in 2010, and was located near the health center.



Local middle and high school students learn, dynamically, in the classroom and in the clinic. Certified teachers were hired for the school, and staff from every position in a health center (administrative, finance, medical, pharmacy, etc.) serve as guest lecturers and mentors. Scholars are guided to develop their own specific health goals for their future lives, and this human-centered education culminates with a 12th grade hands-on practicum, ensuring that their academic knowledge can blossom into tangible health care skills.

To measure success, the Health & Science Charter School measures High School graduation, college or technical school acceptance, and tracks education completion and work readiness. In addition, they track the standard indicators required to maintain their charter school status in New York City. Graduation rates have hovered near 90%. Biology, pre-med and nursing are the most popular majors. This past year, nine seniors became certified EMTs and 22 earned certification as first responders. The valedictorian is currently working as an EMT for the health center's ambulance program.