



Recruitment of Minorities into Dentistry

Overview and Background Facts:

The percentage of minority students enrolled at Illinois' dental schools only represents about 1/3 of the percentage that these races comprise in the general population in Illinois.

Nationwide ADA data in 2003 showed that underrepresented minorities (American Indian, African-American and Hispanic) account for 6.4% of professionally active dentists while Illinois had a 5.4% representation.

Currently, Hispanics comprise 5.2%, African-Americans 4.5% and American Indian 0.2% of the dental students at the dental school in Illinois. In 2004, nationwide dental student enrollment was comprised of 6.3% Hispanic, 4.5% African-American, and 0.3% American Indian.

The second year dental student class at SIU is 15% African-American, Native American and Hispanic.

Comments:

It is a mistake to assume that minority dentists will or should establish a dental practice in an underserved area of the state or in a geographic area with a high similar minority population.

At the present, many professions are experiencing an issue with recruiting minorities into their profession, and dentistry is no exception. It appears in Illinois that the specific under-represented minorities most affected are African-Americans and Hispanics.

ISDS Position Statement:

Illinois dentists and dental schools need to work together to recruit under-represented minorities, especially African-Americans and Hispanics, into dentistry. ISDS should assist in developing programs with the Illinois dental schools that attempt to reach college-bound high school students and to introduce the profession of dentistry to junior high students.