

HPSA Report Reveals Factors that Support Applicant Success as Future Professionals

New research reveals that while health professions admissions achieve equitable outcomes across demographic groups, access to resources varies significantly.

HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA, UNITED STATES, October 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [New research](#) from the [Health Professional Student Association](#) reveals that while health professions admissions achieve equitable outcomes across demographic groups, access to resources varies significantly. Among 115 students in the 2024-2025 cycle, underrepresented applicants succeeded at equal rates but relied more on peer networks and alternative resources than on formal advising; widely adopted Situational Judgment Tests had a minimal impact on admissions decisions.

While aspiring physicians understand the importance of high grades and exam scores, many underestimate the impact of financial resources and access to advising on their success. With significant changes in the U.S. admissions process for entering medical, dental, and veterinary students, the Health Professional Student Association conducted a year-long survey to identify factors that promoted applicant success. Using two complementary surveys, the study examined how the incorporation of new assessment tools and the shift from race-based diversity initiatives could impact the future face of the health professions.

The survey collected responses from 115 students during the 2024-2025 application cycle through an anonymous 176-item questionnaire. Participants were recruited via [Student Doctor Network forums](#) and social media. Data were collected using REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture), a secure web-based platform designed for research data management.



Profile of the Accepted Applicant 2025

Analyzing future trends in healthcare admissions

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Profile of the Admitted Applicant 2025

KEY FINDINGS

Multi-Stage Screening Improves Efficiency

Recorded pre-screening interviews have become standard practice, with 55.7% of respondents participating before live interviews. Applicants participating in both screening and live interviews achieved an acceptance rate of 95.5% compared with 80.5% for programs without pre-screening, suggesting more efficient candidate selection.

Situational Judgment Tests Add Complexity Without Clear Benefit

Situational Judgment Tests assess applicants' professionalism and interpersonal skills by presenting fictional scenarios common in health care settings. Despite widespread adoption (84% took Casper, 55% took PREview), performance showed minimal correlation with admissions success. Only one-third of accepted Casper test-takers attended programs requiring the score, suggesting limited practical impact on enrollment decisions.

Equal Outcomes, Unequal Pathways

All demographic groups achieved nearly identical admissions outcomes despite different starting points and resource access patterns:

- > Underrepresented minority (URM) and overrepresented minority (ORM) applicants had nearly identical GPAs (3.83 vs. 3.84) and interview invitations (median of four each)
- > First-generation and non-traditional students achieved comparable success to “traditional” applicants despite lower GPAs
- > Acceptance rates were consistent across demographic groups

Resource Access Gaps Persist

Significant differences emerged in how students accessed information and support:

- > Traditional and continuing-generation students used formal advising at twice the rate of underrepresented peers (69% vs. 33%)
- > Underrepresented students relied more heavily on recruitment fairs and crowdsourced forums



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like Student Doctor Network

- > All groups universally valued peer-generated content over social media influencer advice
- > Information inequities existed, but students navigated alternative networks to achieve similar outcomes

Pipeline Programs Create Access, Not Advantage

STEM pipeline programs successfully attracted diverse participants but did not provide competitive admissions advantages:

- > Pre-college pipeline participants were significantly more diverse (46% first-generation college, 36% LGBTQ+) compared with college-level participants (11% first-generation, 0% LGBTQ+)
- > 40% of participants ignored pipeline advisor guidance, preferring peer networks for application strategy
- > Despite high success rates when used, 77% of pre-college and 56% of college pipeline participants never sought available financial assistance, indicating significant underutilization of available support resources.

IMPLICATIONS

Our findings reveal that while admissions processes achieve equitable outcomes across demographic groups, pathways to success vary significantly. The evolution toward multi-stage screening improves efficiency but may not substantially impact diversity. Applicants see SJT adoption as making admissions decisions more subjective, even though most candidates clearly demonstrate an understanding of expected professional behaviors. Information access inequities persist, with underrepresented students navigating alternative resource networks to achieve similar outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutions should: (1) streamline assessment requirements by eliminating low-impact tools; (2) strengthen alternative information channels like peer forums and recruitment fairs; (3) improve financial assistance outreach; (4) realign pipeline program messaging to emphasize access over advantage; and (5) develop targeted support systems that acknowledge diverse pathways to health care careers.

This research provides actionable insights for admissions committees, pre-health advisors, and diversity initiative leaders seeking to optimize support systems while maintaining rigorous selection standards in an increasingly complex admissions landscape.

FUTURE SURVEY FOCUS

A survey of 2025-2026 applicants will further study how changes in higher education financial aid and loan repayment programs, enacted through the 2025 HR 1 "One Big Beautiful Bill," affect

their choices to pursue professional education.

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