

More Medical Schools Expected To Train Doctors On IDD

by Michelle Diamant | November 6, 2023

A new effort is underway to dramatically expand training on intellectual and developmental disabilities at the nation's medical schools.

The health insurance company Elevance Health is putting up \$1.42 million in funding with a goal of more than doubling the number of medical schools preparing future doctors to care for this population.

The investment will back the National Inclusive Curriculum for Health Education Medical, or NICHE Medical, an initiative of the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry that helps medical schools develop and implement a curriculum on intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Currently, 20 medical schools are supported by NICHE Medical, representing just 10% of all the programs across the country. With the funding, that number is expected to grow to 25%, Elevance Health said, a threshold that's likely to encourage all medical schools to follow suit.

"More than half of medical students have no training in caring for adults with IDD, and education about children with IDD remains minimal as well," said Dr. Priya Chandan, who serves as NICHE Medical project director and clinical associate professor in physical medicine and rehabilitation at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. "However, Elevance Health's collaboration and landmark funding is going to accelerate the inclusion of IDD in medical education, empowering thousands of future physicians across the nation to equitably and effectively address the needs of patients who have IDD."

Over the next five years, the new funding is expected to support curriculum implementation at an additional 28 medical schools as well as scholarships, Elevance Health said. Already, grants have been awarded to Albany Medical College in New York, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, New York Medical College, Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine in New Jersey, Stanford Medical School in California, UMass Chan Medical School in Massachusetts and the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

The lack of training on developmental disabilities at medical schools has led to significant challenges in accessing health care. A 2022 study found that just 41% of physicians considered themselves able to provide patients with disabilities a similar quality of care to others.

Disability advocates have pressed for years to get training on the needs of this population added to medical school curriculum requirements, but to date, those efforts have been unsuccessful. Last year, however, the presidents of the American Medical Association and the American Dental Association committed to work on expanding disability training for medical and dental students.

Federal officials also recently announced \$8 million in awards to 18 medical training programs to improve care of those with physical or intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as individuals with limited English proficiency.

Read more stories like this one. Sign up for Disability Scoop's free email newsletter to get the latest developmental disability news sent straight to your inbox.

© 2023 Disability Scoop, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

View this article online at <https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2023/11/06/more-medical-schools-expected-to-train-doctors-on-idd/30619/>

×

You're reading 1 of 2 free articles this month.

Get unlimited Disability Scoop access starting at just \$5

[JOIN TODAY](#)

Already a member? [Log In](#)