

Pathway programs for medical school diversity disrupted by pandemic

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Medical school diversity pathway programs were substantially disrupted

by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study published online Aug. 29 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Sonal Batra, M.D., from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and colleagues examined changes in medical [school](#) pathway programs during the COVID-19 [pandemic](#). Semistructured interviews were conducted with 12 medical school pathway program administrators and academic leaders of U.S. allopathic and osteopathic medical schools.

The researchers found value in community partnerships for sustaining programming, and they found psychosocial support was important for mediating students' mental health challenges due to COVID-19 and remote learning. In a [survey](#) of 112 schools, 94.6 percent had been sponsoring or assisting with pathway programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, but 39.6 percent had reduced [pathway](#) programs since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic compared with the previous year. Compared with older student groups, program cancelations were more likely to be reported in elementary school-aged students (50.0 percent decrease in programming) and middle school-aged students (32.6 percent decrease).

"Ongoing and flexible supports may be needed to sustain these programs," the authors write. "These findings are timely given recent investments in equity-focused programs to diversify the health workforce."

More information: Sonal Batra et al, Association of the COVID-19 Pandemic With Medical School Diversity Pathway Programs, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.29086](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.29086)

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