



WELLNESS INITIATIVE: Lessons from Community Voices

Background

This project, funded by Communities of Opportunity, aims to address the deep-seated disparities in healthcare access and quality caused by structural racism and inequities. A key factor driving these disparities is the lack of diversity in the healthcare workforce, which limits culturally responsive care and leaves the needs of BIPOC patients unaddressed. The same structural barriers that create these healthcare disparities create obstacles for BIPOC individuals to enter and advance in healthcare careers through unequal access to educational opportunities, mentorship, and professional development — further perpetuating the cycle of inequity.

Evaluation methods

From July 2023 to June 2024, the B2L P.O.W.E.R. Council held 8 listening sessions with 93 community members. These sessions focused on healthcare careers, harm and healing, and access and navigation of the healthcare system. Participants completed surveys and polls and engaged in group discussions based on open-ended questions. We conducted qualitative and quantitative analyses.

Findings

HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCES

Two-thirds of participants recounted traumatic or negative experiences within healthcare settings, including a lack of interpreter access, being ignored, and discrimination. These experiences led to a fear of visiting healthcare professionals. Positive experiences with compassionate and attentive providers enhanced trust in the healthcare system.

HEALTHCARE DIVERSITY

Participants felt that healthcare providers do not reflect the communities they serve, leading to language barriers, cultural misunderstanding, and lack of trust. Healthcare systems must actively recruit and retain a diverse workforce to improve patient/provider communication and foster a more inclusive environment.



I have searched for a Black doctor and you can't really find any. And that is disheartening because, us Black people have different things that we go through and it would be nice to talk to someone that understands and has gone through the same type of thing

HEALTHCARE CAREERS

Many participants were interested in pursuing healthcare careers, but they faced barriers, such as the high cost of education, lack of financial support, and limited access to mentorship and professional networks. More targeted support and resources would help those from underrepresented communities enter and succeed in the healthcare field.



WELLNESS INITIATIVE:

Recommendations from Community Voices

Recommendation

Key finding: Increasing diversity in the healthcare workforce is essential to addressing racism, lack of representation, and barriers to accessing quality healthcare.

Primary goal: Collaboratively build capacity for Black and Brown youth to enter healthcare careers.

Supporting BIPOC Healthcare Career Pathway Programs

HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS:

- Collaborate with us to build mentorship pathway programs to provide students with hands-on experiences that foster career interest and readiness.
- Allow us to survey your healthcare teams to understand their perspectives on organizational support, confidence in providing care to Black and Brown patients, and inequities they encountered to entering the healthcare field.
- Sponsor our events and programs, such as Melanin and Medicine, to build community--organizational connections. Show your commitment by completing a Letter of Intent to partner with Build2Lead on future opportunities.

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS:

- Join our P.O.W.E.R. Council, a platform that empowers community members and healthcare providers to drive change in healthcare systems.
- Engage in our events, such as Melanin and Medicine, to support Black and Brown youth and young adults interested in the healthcare field.
- Incorporate Build2Lead in your organization's equity and inclusion strategies.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- Join Build2Lead as we create healthcare pathway opportunities
- Help other Black and Brown healthcare providers connect with communities
- Facilitate your community and clients to get involved in our Community Council, a platform for amplifying Black and Brown voices and building advocacy action plans for healthcare, education, and justice systems.

MELANIN & MEDICINE



Build 2 Lead, in partnership with Virginia Mason Franciscan Health, Morehouse School of Medicine, and educational partners, has hosted two Melanin in Medicine events to connect students with Black and Brown healthcare professionals and explore healthcare careers. The events include breakout sessions on mental health, career navigation, and battling discrimination.



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JOIN THE
COMMUNITY
COUNCIL