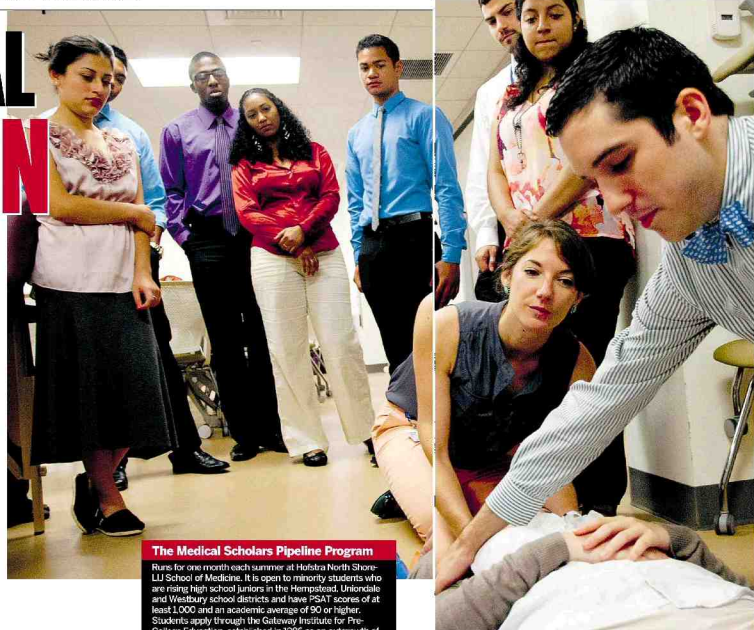


## LONG ISLAND

# A MEDICAL MISSION



**The Medical Scholars Pipeline Program**  
Runs for one month each summer at Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine. It is open to minority students who are rising high school juniors in the Hempstead, Uniondale and Westbury school districts and have PSAT scores of at least 1,000 and an academic average of 90 or higher. Students apply through the Gateway Institute for Pre-College Education, established in 1986 as an outgrowth of the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education at The City College of New York. The application deadline is Feb. 15. For more information, call project coordinator Gina Granger at 516-463-7550.

Med students Lianne Cagnazzi and Kevin Smith demonstrate. **Video:** [newsday.com/nassau](http://newsday.com/nassau)

## Hofstra program hopes to inspire high school students to seek career as doctors

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Hofstra medical student Kevin Smith, demonstrating how to transport a patient with a broken limb, first gave his listeners a technical explanation of how to create a splint. Then, he delivered this simpler description: "You want to make a leg sandwich."

That was all it took to get a rise out of a group of nine high school graduates during a recent session on emergency medical techniques.

The eager students, mostly 18-year-olds, had a barrage of questions: "If they dislocate something, do you want to put it back into place first?" No. "Do you give pain medication?" Depends. "What do you do if you can't lift the patient?" Ask for help.

Smith, who has completed

two years at Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine and is an emergency medical technician, volunteered to host the students in a scaled-down version of his own hands-on medical school curriculum.

The "mini medical school" is part of the growing Medical Scholars Pipeline Program, a monthlong summer session that the medical school operates to encourage academically talented and economically disadvantaged students to become doctors.

"I think it is very important to expose students to medicine at an early age to see if it is something they want to do," said Smith, 25, of Carle Place. "And the real way to test my skills is to teach it to someone else."

The competitive program gives Nassau County students

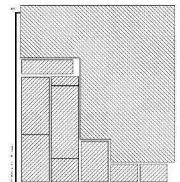
from the Hempstead, Uniondale and Westbury school districts, as well as students from public and parochial schools in Queens, a chance to learn about the medical field. The mission is to boost the number of physicians who are minorities by giving the students a competitive edge while still in high school.

"We say, 'We want to take you from 11th grade and deliver you to the steps of medical school,'" said Gina Granger, the program's coordinator.

The nation is expected to confront an overall shortage of physicians over the next decade, and there's an even greater need for diversity in the physician workforce, experts say.

In 2012, the enrollment in U.S. medical schools was 6.8 percent black or African-American, 8.8 percent Hispanic or Latino, 22.4 percent Asian and 59.3 percent non-Hispanic white, according to data from the Association of American Medical Colleges.

"People do better when doctors come from their culture



and their background,” said Dr. Lawrence Smith, founding dean of the Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine and physician-in-chief of the North Shore-LIJ Health System. (He is not related to Kevin Smith.)

Now in its fourth summer, the pipeline program has 61 students, many of whom have attended previously. The youngest students accepted are rising high school juniors, and they can continue until they reach their college junior year.

More than 100 students apply yearly for about 20 open spots, and about 70 are interviewed in person. The medical school budgets about \$30,000 for the program, Dr. Smith said, and there is no cost to the students. The program receives grants from the Gateway Institute for Pre-College Education, Uniondale High School and United Healthcare.

The students get SAT coaching and CPR training. They work with medical school faculty mentors to conduct scientific research projects, and complete a clinical rotation at Franklin Hospital Medical Center in Valley Stream, an affiliate of the North Shore-LIJ Health System.

“I want to be a neuro-radiologist,” said Gilbert Tagufa, 18, who graduated last month as valedictorian of Uniondale High. “That’s someone who images the brain and makes diagnoses.”

Tagufa, whose parents emigrated from the Philippines in the 1980s and are nurses — as are his two older sisters — will begin his undergraduate degree next month in Hofstra’s Honors College.

“Before coming into this program,” he said, “I didn’t even know that profession existed.”

Not all of the students decide to become doctors at the end of the program, which includes a session on other health care professions.

Jada Grace, 18, of Hempstead, initially thought that

she wanted to become a pediatrician. Returning for her third summer, she is proud to say she will head to the University of Hartford next month to start an accelerated, seven-year program in physical therapy.

“I decided that I didn’t want to spend my career diagnosing what was wrong with patients,” Grace said. “I wanted to really be a part of helping them recover.”