

# Attitudes Toward Healthcare Entrepreneurship Among College of Health Professions Students

Dustin Siler, Joshua Ellis

Faculty: Ngoyi Bukonda

*Department of Physician Assistant, College of Health Professions*

**Background:** Healthcare systems in developing countries are largely government-run enterprises. Limited facilities and unequal distribution of clinics creates areas of limited access to healthcare. In response, some private-owned facilities have emerged with the potential to offset the disparities created by governmental inadequacies. Previous research suggests that most entrepreneurs in healthcare have previous medical exposure. To date we have found no research specific to students in health professions programs evaluating interest toward engaging in healthcare entrepreneurship. The attitudes, beliefs, and inclinations of this population may provide insight into encouraging or dissuading factors.

**Purpose:** To gain understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, and inclinations of health professions students toward entrepreneurship; data which may be useful in creating a model for development and implementation of strategies encouraging students to engage in healthcare entrepreneurship in developing countries.

**Methods:** A thirty question survey was distributed electronically to all Physician Assistant students at Wichita State University for the classes of 2014-2016 with anticipated further distribution to all College of Health Professions students. The survey asks demographic and background questions such as age, gender, marital status, hometown, program of study, education and professions of parents, and previous entrepreneurial experience. A Likert scale is used to assess students' predisposing factors, enabling factors, and reinforcing factors toward healthcare entrepreneurship. To date twenty-five of a desired 150 responses have been received. Preliminary data is being analyzed using Qualtrics software. Means with standard deviation and percentages will be used to analyze descriptive data. Frequencies, correlation tests, t-tests, Chi-Square tests and ANOVA will be used as appropriate. Statistical significance is established as  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .

**Expected Results and Benefits of Research:** Initial review of data shows 72% of respondents had parents who started a business but 71% have had no personal exposure to business classes. Responses are equally split between those who have considered starting a business and those who have not. A majority of responses feel that it would be easier to work for an established healthcare organization and that the current healthcare delivery system in the U.S. discourages starting a healthcare business. Through further data analysis we expect to find additional reasons for decreased entrepreneurial interest include: lack of incentive, lack of funding, minimal encouragement from professional programs or colleagues, and professional immaturity. This study, by targeting students in health professions programs, will find application in developing strategies for future research and understanding areas requiring greater focus in order to overcome current barriers.