Health Matters: Student-Developed Research Questions by Project SCORE Students

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Systemic inequities in access to healthcare and quality educational opportunity for the youth of Mississippi (MS) are powerful forces that disengage students from entering pathways toward STEM careers.

Project SCORE (Student-Centered Outcomes Research Experience) engages students from groups underrepresented in STEM career trajectories through a youth participatory action research (YPAR) approach, capturing and retaining their attention through the immediacy of health threats such as COVID-19.

Project SCORE brings together underrepresented high school and graduate health sciences students from two communities with significant health disparities in a year-long weekly afterschool program to develop relevant health behavior research questions, provide training in research methods, and facilitate the development of student-conducted research projects mentored by near-peer graduate health sciences students and faculty. Students complete their experience with a week-long campus immersion experience.
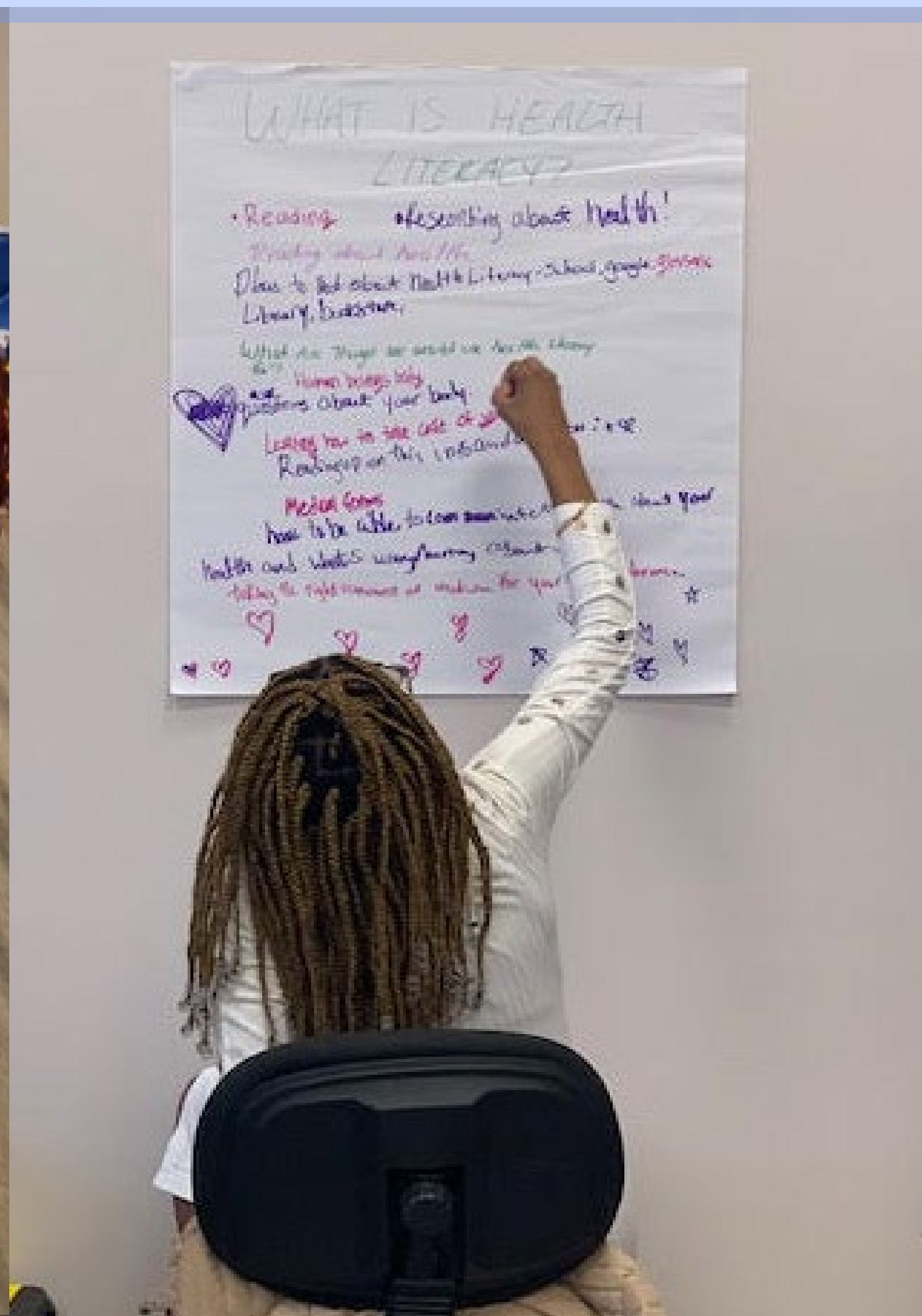
STUDENT-DEVELOPED RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What causes teen depression?

Why do teens vape?

Why do students abuse substances?

Why is it important that teens get enough sleep?

Does caloric need differ by age and sex?

How can teens effectively take action to improve their health?

Are school schedules good for teens' health?

Could breaks during the school day help students focus?

Do cell phones affect your sleep?

Why do teens spend so much time on cell phones? Is this harmful?

SCORE students building a #corsirosenthalbox as part of a COVID-19 lesson on layered mitigation

SCORE students describing what health literacy means to them

STUDENT-CENTERED

A patient-centered approach has demonstrated that centering patients' needs is an effective means to improve health outcomes. This approach has been minimally used with youth, and infrequently in health behavior and promotion research. Project SCORE seeks to leverage this approach by training students how to develop good research questions and then, using a YPAR approach, having the students generate a research agenda that is directly responsive to their needs, increasing the likelihood that research efforts will result in effective interventions.

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