

# Pilot Program: Student-Run Patient Navigator Program Catering to the Health and Well-being of Refugee and Underserved Patients



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## 1. Introduction

Refugee populations require intensive healthcare as a consequence of immigration status, language barriers, and limited health literacy. There is potential for health professional students to work longitudinally with refugee families alongside physicians and social workers to allow for improved day-to-day navigation of US healthcare and social services. The student navigator program at Yale—comprised of medical, physician assistant, and nursing students—aims to utilize professional students to advocate for patients in a healthcare setting and facilitate access to community resources.

## 2. Methodology

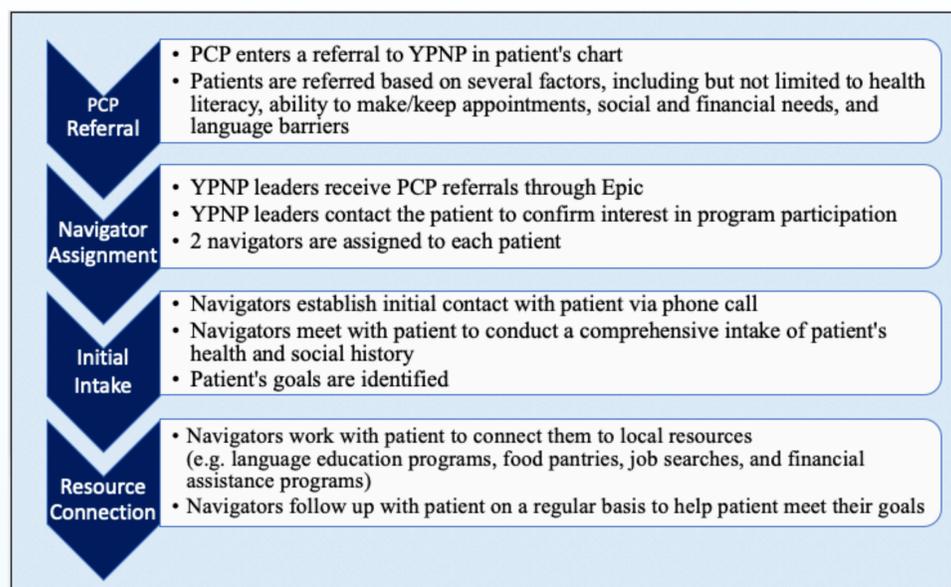
Data was collected from April 1, 2019 – February 22, 2020 documenting the student navigator program and referral process with patients from the Adult and Pediatric Clinics at the Yale Primary Care center in New Haven, Connecticut. Data included student demographics and referral reasons of refugees enrolled in the Yale student navigator program.



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## 2. Program Patient Workflow



## 3. Results

In the first 10 months of this pilot student navigator program, 62 trainees participated (69% medical students, 24% nursing students, and 7% physician associate students). There were 24 referrals during this period, with the most common referral reasons including assistance with: scheduling appointments (54%), transportation (29%), medication adherence (21%), medical supplies (17%), and food (17%). Out of 24 referrals, 75% were connected with navigators.

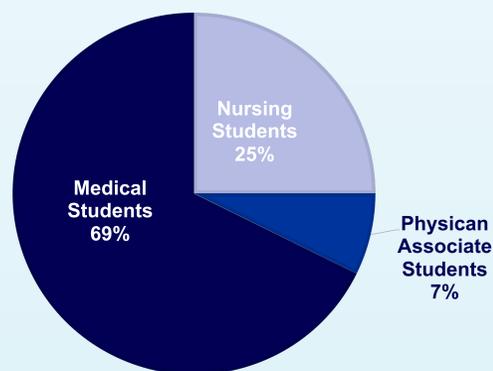


Figure 1. Graduate Healthcare Student Participation: Breakdown by student participation in the program.

## 3. Results

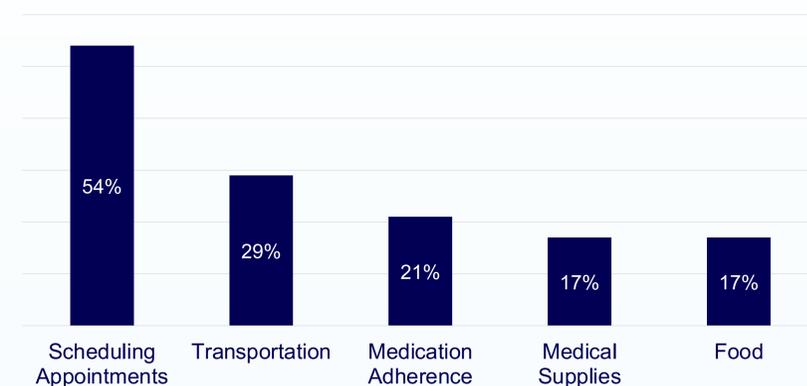


Figure 2. Reasons for Referral amongst Patients: Reasons for referral are identified by referring providers through an EPIC template that directs patients to the Navigator program. The above indicate the most common reasons for referrals

## 4. Discussion

Student programs provide an avenue to quickly connect refugee and underserved patients to food, transportation, and scheduling support. Through referrals, students can work with refugee families on critical issues that impact daily health and well-being, effectively reducing the burden on social workers who are responsible for managing several families simultaneously. Further research is required to characterize the impact of such programs on refugee health outcomes and future healthcare navigation.

## 5. Future Directions

- Undergraduate student participation to expand the reach of the program
- Research to investigate the benefits for students and patients participating in the program.

## 6. Acknowledgements

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