

Urging blacks toward health-care fields

Program includes NSU, Hampton U, other Va. colleges

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RICHMOND — Norfolk State University, Hampton University and three other predominantly black colleges are teaming up with Virginia Commonwealth University and the University of Nebraska for

a program that will encourage black students to become health-care practitioners or researchers.

Under the Virginia-Nebraska Alliance, the schools will work together to create research opportunities for black undergraduates and faculty and encourage them to enter health-care careers.

The partnership's ultimate goal is improving the health of black Americans by reducing disparities in access to quality health care based on race,

economic and social circumstances.

"We need to address the growing problems in the minority community of diabetes, cancer, stroke and asthma," said Dr. Rubens Pamies, the vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Nebraska Medical Center on Wednesday.

Activities will include student research opportunities during the summer, faculty exchanges, seminars and presentations and collaborative,

grant applications. Student researchers spend at least two summers at Nebraska's medical center and typically are supported by stipends and funding from the National Institutes of Health and other sources.

Other predominantly black schools in the alliance are St. Paul's College, Virginia State University and Virginia Union University. J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College in the Richmond area also is involved.