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CHICAGO, IL



# The Pre-Health Advisor's Blueprint: Transforming Aspirations into Healthcare Careers with the Right Tools

Date: July 25, 2023



# Meet Our Presenter

**Tony Wynne**

Executive Director  
NAAHP, Inc.





# Agenda

1. About NAAHP
2. Who are Pre-Health Advisors?
3. Navigating the Landscape
4. Discussion Break
5. Data-Driven Advising
6. Final Thoughts

# Who is NAAHP?

## Commitment To Excellence



We strive for the highest standards in health professions advising, ensuring our members have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to provide exceptional guidance to students.

## Professional Development & Growth



We are dedicated to providing ongoing learning opportunities and resources that support the personal and professional growth of our members.

## Collaboration & Partnership



We believe in the power of working together, fostering connections among our members, and building strategic alliances with other organizations in the health professions education sector.

## Inclusivity, Equity & Diversity



We celebrate the diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences of our members & partners and seek to create an inclusive environment where all voices are valued and respected.





# NAAHP Members

Membership = 1900  
Non-Member Partners = 15



High School  
Counselors



Community College  
Advisors



Undergraduate  
Advisors



Programs of The  
Health Professions



Associations of the  
Health Professions



Partnerships  
(Educational, Corporate,  
Organizational)



# Who are pre-health advisors?

I'm glad you asked....



# Pre-Health Advisors Are...



### Faculty Advisors

Though less common these days, the faculty advisor is often a science faculty (HS, CC, Undergrad, Postbac)



### Career Advisors

The career advisor is often hired by institutions to serve in "centers" and are often business specialists



### Independent Advisors

Often prior institutional advisors who have left positions and continue to advise (sometimes contracted)



### Recruiters

Program recruiters from health professions institutions

# The Advisor's Role



## Guidance

A pre-health advisor guides pre-med students through the medical school application process by advising them on course selection, medical experiences, entrance exams, and application materials. They provide critical knowledge to help students successfully navigate admissions.



## Support

The advisor is a mentor to students throughout the medical school application timeline by regularly tracking progress, overcoming obstacles, and ensuring strong applications. If needed, they continue supporting students by helping them reevaluate options, manage course loads, gain more experience, and reapply stronger.



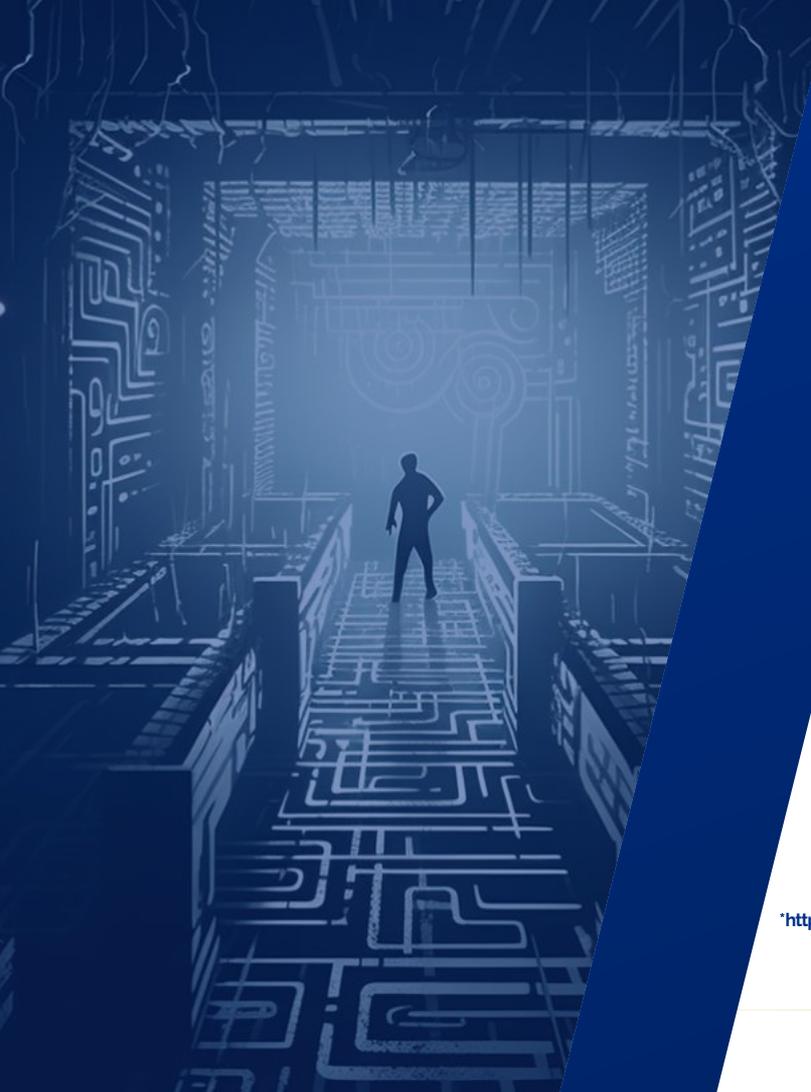
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# Navigating The Landscape



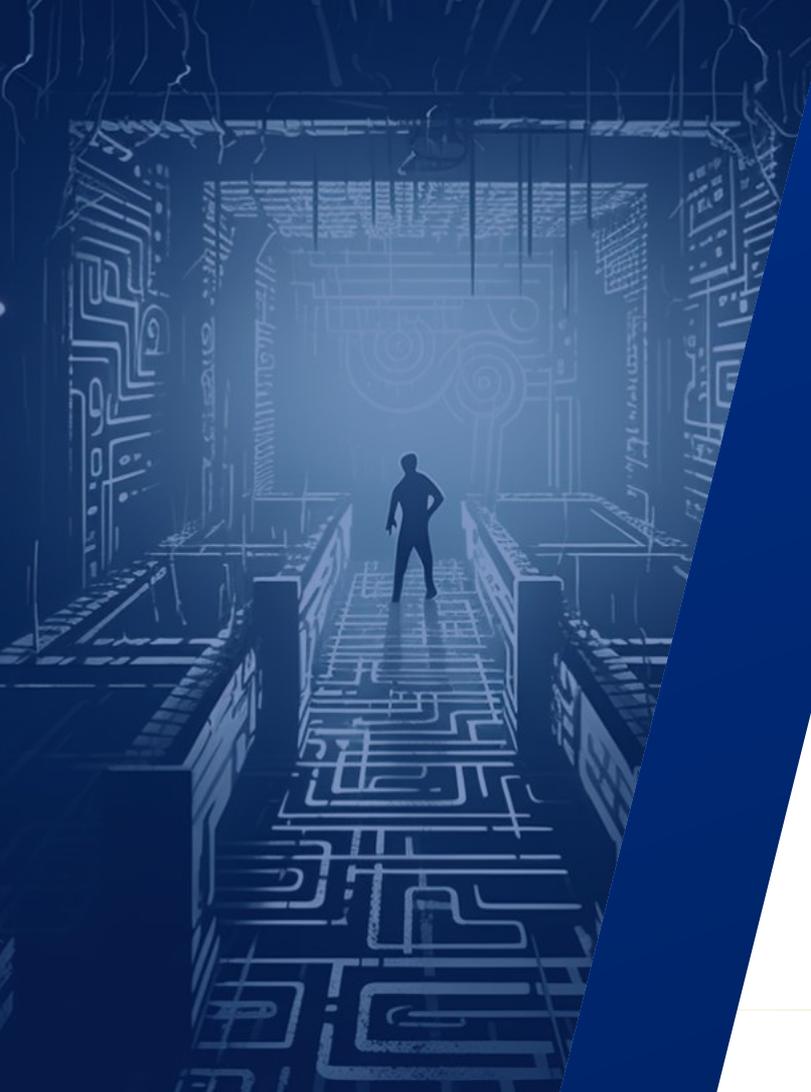
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# Advisor : Student Ratio

- At many larger universities, there are often designated pre-health/pre-med advisors or teams who work specifically with students interested in pursuing careers in healthcare. The advisor-to-student ratio can vary from 1 advisor per 50-100+ students at these schools.
- Smaller colleges may not have dedicated pre-health advisors. In these cases, general academic/faculty advisors may also assist students with pre-health planning and preparation. The ratios are harder to estimate as advising is mixed with other responsibilities.
- According to one survey\* of pre-health advisors, the average caseload was around 90 students per advisor. However, there was significant variability, with some advisors working with as many as 300+ students.
- Averages likely fall somewhere in the range of 1 pre-health advisor per 50 to 150 undergraduate students interested in healthcare careers at many universities.

\*<https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advisor-to-Student-Ratio-Caseload-Resources.aspx>



# Advising Trends

- Specifically at smaller institutions, and community colleges, budgets impacted have (in some cases) removed pre-health advising services including alumni and/or Postbac advising.
- These impacts have driven the rise of faculty advisors (many who planned to retire) becoming independent advisors.
- Business model trends in independent advisors have shifted to contract advising with colleges and universities. Which is more cost-effective for institutions than hiring full-time faculty.
- Increased demand and competition - More students are interested in pursuing pre-health paths like medical school, leading to higher advisor caseloads and increased competition for limited spots.
- Technology utilization - Advisors are using more tech tools like Handshake, Salesforce, and Slack to track students and manage advising. Virtual advising also increased during COVID.
- Earlier intervention - There are efforts to engage students in pre-health planning and advising in high school & earlier in college, starting freshman year.

# Advising Trends (con't)

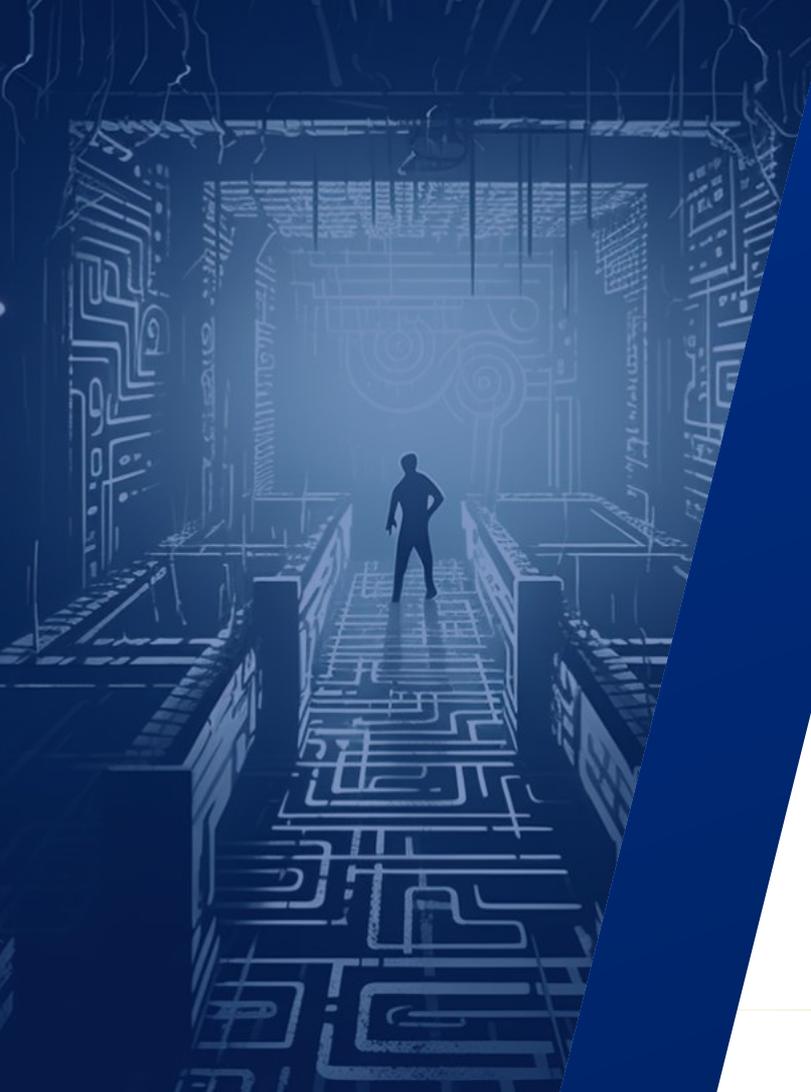
- Application support - Pre-health advisors are providing more direct application assistance, like personal statement writing support and mock interviews. This requires more advisor bandwidth.
- Training standardization - Efforts to standardize pre-health advisor training and define core competencies are increasing through groups like NAAHP. More degree programs specifically for advising exist.
  - Master's in Higher Education Administration - Many programs offer concentrations or specializations in academic advising, student services, or college counseling. Coursework covers topics like student development theory, higher education policy, counseling skills, and more.
  - Master's in College Student Personnel - Designed to prepare graduates for roles in student affairs and services, including academic and career advising. Field experiences are a key component.
  - Certificate in Academic Advising - Some colleges offer post-baccalaureate certificate programs in academic advising for those who want specialized training, often geared towards new advisors.
  - PhD in Higher Education - At the doctoral level, students can choose a concentration in counseling/advising for roles as administrators and advising directors at colleges and universities.
  - Dual Degree Programs - Some institutions offer dual programs that combine a master's in higher education with an MBA or law degree for those interested in university administration broadly.



Certificates of completion  
Accreditation of Pre-Health Advisors



National/Regional Leadership  
Institutional Leadership



## *Challenges: Advisor*

- Every program has varied requirements
- Finding requirement changes annually
- Access to timely student results (Multiple, but incomplete resources)
- Navigation of over twenty health professions
- Clear guidance for underrepresented or case exceptions (undocumented)
- Clear guidance on experimental requirements (SJT's)
- Need for advocacy for pre-health advisors



# Discussion Break...

How can Application Services Improve the Advisor Experience?





# Data-Driven Advising





# Data-Driven Advising

## Leveraging Application Data

Review school-specific acceptance data

- Analyze rates for own institution vs. national averages
- Identify strengths/weaknesses in applicant pools

Track application completion metrics

- Evaluate trends in applying vs. matriculating
- Assess barriers causing drop-off at each stage

Identify most commonly selected health programs

- Tailor advising to popular target schools
- Adjust for changes in student interests over time

Correlate admissions with advising received

- Connect application outcomes to advising usage
- Demonstrate impact of advisor interventions

Inform training and resources

- Address any advisor knowledge gaps
- Provide more support in challenging areas

A futuristic data visualization room with large screens and interactive displays. Two people are seated at a round table, interacting with a large, glowing digital map of the world. The room is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the screens and the glowing interface elements. The overall aesthetic is high-tech and data-driven.

# Data-Driven Advising

## Improving Advisor Efficiency

Identify application bottlenecks

- Review submitted vs. completed metrics
- Guide students struggling with components

Automate follow-ups on deadlines

- Use portal to track upcoming due dates
- Send automatic reminders to students

Facilitate school comparisons

- Pull accepted student data for multiple programs
- Help students weigh options objectively

Enable targeted interventions

- Identify at-risk applicants using analytics
- Provide focused support to get them on track



# Key Takeaways

- Centralized application data offers insights
- Metrics identify student needs and advisor gaps
- Data-driven improvements in advising programs
  
- Application portals provide critical tracking data
- Metrics allow targeted, proactive student support
- Automation saves advisors time and energy



# Final Thoughts

# Final Thoughts...

Pre-health advisors of all kinds are critical guides for pre-health students navigating the complex admissions process.

Advisors offer ongoing support throughout the process - tracking progress, overcoming obstacles, and mentoring students.

With knowledgeable advisors, pre-health students can submit their strongest possible applications.

Through strategic partnerships with CAS, health professions associations, and academic programs, pre-health advisors can access the tools, resources, and knowledge needed to provide exceptional guidance to students navigating their journey into healthcare careers.



# Q&A

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# *Thank You*



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