

# Help Your Student Reach the Summit

## Altitude Referral Guide





## Help Your Student Succeed

We would like your help in identifying compassionate students who have the potential to succeed and excel in healthcare - but may have never considered it an option due to financial or social barriers.

Altitude: Healthcare Mentoring is an exciting new initiative created by the Ontario Medical Students Association (OMSA), a section of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA). Altitude promises to provide your students with a unique experience designed to open their eyes to a career in healthcare.

Across Ontario, there exists a population of graduating secondary school students who have not yet reached their full potential. If given the chance, these students could do extraordinary things. Members of this group are often from rural communities, are of low socioeconomic status, belong to under-represented minorities, or are the first in their families to attend a post-secondary institution. They may possess the intellectual capacity to succeed, but they are limited in their opportunities and supports. They do not have friends or family members in healthcare and as a result careers like medicine remain out of reach even for these promising students.

This is an important problem for Canadians, as research has shown that students who are members of these populations are more likely to enter primary care, practise in areas of healthcare shortage, and care for the most vulnerable of patients.

Altitude is a unique year-long experience designed to help students as they make the transition into university, and provide them with the skills and opportunities to pursue a career in healthcare. In the program, a first-year undergraduate student from one of these under-represented populations is matched with a medical student mentor. Each mentor works one-on-one with a student to help develop the competencies necessary to excel as an undergraduate student and in a future health career. In exchange, each undergraduate participant, returns the favor by mentoring youth in his/her community. In this model, the knowledge and experience flow from the medical student mentor to the undergraduate student and, finally, to youth in the community - a process we call Cascading Mentorship.



# ALTITUDE

# Referral Process

We would like your help in identifying students that would benefit from the Altitude program. We believe that educators (guidance counsellors, teachers and principals) and community leaders have had the opportunity to learn a great deal about their students and their suitability for Altitude.

We ask educators and community leaders to refer students to the program by completing the online Referral Form available at [apply.altitudementoring.ca](http://apply.altitudementoring.ca). Students referred to the program are also required to submit an online Mentee Application, also available at [apply.altitudementoring.ca](http://apply.altitudementoring.ca).

Referral Process:

- 1) The deadline for completion of the online Referral Form and Mentee Application is **June 1st**.
- 2) The student has a phone interview during the month of **June**.
- 3) Successful applicants will be notified of their acceptance to the Altitude program in early **July**.

For access to the application forms and more information about the program visit [altitudementoring.ca](http://altitudementoring.ca)

\*If no reliable access to the Internet, students may receive the application by mail

## Eligibility

Altitude: Healthcare Mentoring has sites in the following regions and universities:

Hamilton (McMaster University), Waterloo (University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University), Niagara (Brock University), Toronto (University of Toronto - St. George, Ryerson University), Mississauga (University of Toronto - Mississauga), London (University of Western Ontario), Windsor (University of Windsor), Sudbury (Laurentian University), Thunder Bay (Lakehead University), Kingston (Queen's University) and Ottawa (University of Ottawa, Carleton University).

**If you have students who will be attending these Ontario universities in the fall they may be eligible for the program.**

Additional eligibility requirements below:

- - Must be referred to the program by an educator or community leader
- - Be accepted into one of the universities listed above to begin studies in September. Students attending college programs, university-college joint programs or students who have already been accepted into a healthcare professional program are not eligible
- - Preference will be given to individuals who are from either: a rural community, are the first in their family to attend a post-secondary institution, have low socioeconomic status or belong to Aboriginal or Black communities.
- - Demonstrate a desire to participate in the program and be willing to abide by all Altitude: Healthcare Mentoring policies and procedures
- - If under the age of majority, be able to obtain parental/guardian permission
- - Agree to a one-year commitment to the program

Final Note: We are not necessarily looking for the straight A+ student with parents who are doctors or lawyers and is currently well on their way to a career in healthcare. Please consider the students you have encountered that are good students but may believe that a career in healthcare is out of reach. If you believe one of these students, with some help, could make a great healthcare professional - then they are perfect for Altitude!

Our goal is simple: to help students, brimming with potential, reach a summit perceived to be insurmountable - a career in healthcare. It is from this analogy that **Altitude** derives its name. The program encourages the next generation of healthcare professionals to reach higher to achieve their dreams.



## Examples of students brimming with potential

Kofi and his family emigrated from West Africa when he was nine years old. He is the eldest of four children. He has an average in the low 80's, however you know that if Kofi really applied himself he could do much better. He has been accepted to McMaster for Science. He has considered dentistry but does not know much about it and thinks that it would be too expensive to attend.



Kate is from a small farming community in rural Ontario. She is the first in her family to go on to post-secondary education. She is about to begin the Bachelor of Arts program in English at Queen's University. Kate is a considerate and patient person, you think she would make an excellent doctor. She has thought about a career in medicine but is concerned about her chances since she has no friends or family in medicine.

Please note: Altitude: Healthcare Mentoring is designed to provide participants with a rich mentoring experience. Altitude does not guarantee admission to any healthcare professional school.

## Contact Information

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