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# RuralMed: Bringing Medical Opportunities to Rural Students

by Arisha Safiq

As a student interested in a future in medicine, living in a rural town of 9,000 residents an hour and a half outside of Kansas City, I’ve come to recognize an opportunity gap I had never heard anyone talk about before. When I first began thinking about medical school, I didn’t even know where to start. In rural areas like mine, this is true for many students. No matter how smart you are or how big your dreams may be, the resources to explore interests in fields like medicine or research simply aren’t here.

That’s how RuralMed began.

RuralMed helps bridge the gap between students in communities like mine and the medical exposure that schools look for. In my own experience, I had to drive several hours just to complete shadowing or volunteering hours in a hospital—time that came at the expense of schoolwork, extracurriculars, and even other volunteering opportunities. RuralMed changes that by bringing resources directly to students, wherever they are. We offer virtual Q&As with healthcare professionals, accessible shadowing experiences, and volunteering opportunities that can be done remotely. My goal isn’t just to help students explore medicine—it’s to help them succeed as future medical professionals.

This isn’t just a project to me—it’s personal. I know what it’s like to spend hours searching online for answers that could have been given in minutes by a mentor. I remember wondering if someone from a small, rural community could ever wear a white coat. Rural communities don’t just need more doctors—they need doctors who understand them, doctors who come from the very communities they serve. And that starts by helping students connect with opportunities that are otherwise out of reach, and by showing them that they belong in medicine too.

If you, or someone you know, would benefit from RuralMed, please see our flyer in the *Resources for Students* section on the next page.

