

Immokalee students get glimpse inside the medical world

Posted: Jul 12, 2013 6:10 PM



IMMOKALEE, FL - Nanci Pineda didn't know much about the medical field until two weeks ago.

"I knew a little bit, but working here and being on this program helped me a lot," Pineda, a junior at Immokalee High School, said.

Florida State University's new summer institute in Immokalee helped her find her passion for medicine and for helping her community.

Immokalee High School students had to apply to the program; those picked received a \$1,000 scholarship to participate.

The students got an inside look at what it means to be a doctor and a medical student.

"We learned about vitals, we learned how to take vitals," said Maria Leon, a junior at Immokalee High School. "We got to shadow doctors and nurses while they were actually working."

"We actually took field trips to different sites. We learned about dental, Lee Memorial and we saw different departments there, too," said Nenaly Patino, also a junior at Immokalee High School.

FSU decided to start the two week program in Immokalee because of the area's lack of doctors.

This is the only federally qualified clinic that provides primary care in Immokalee.

Some wait weeks, even months for an appointment.

"Our basic message to them is that they can be part of the solution," said Elena Reyes, the Southwest Florida Regional Director for FSU College of Medicine. "We are in need of more primary care providers in the rural areas. We are in need of physicians that understand the culture and the language."

The students presented their final project to health care professionals.

Some walk away with an answer for their future career.

"I want to help people out, especially kids that have Down syndrome or any other health problem," Pineda said.

Nine students graduated from the program today. Next week, nine more students will start here at the clinic.