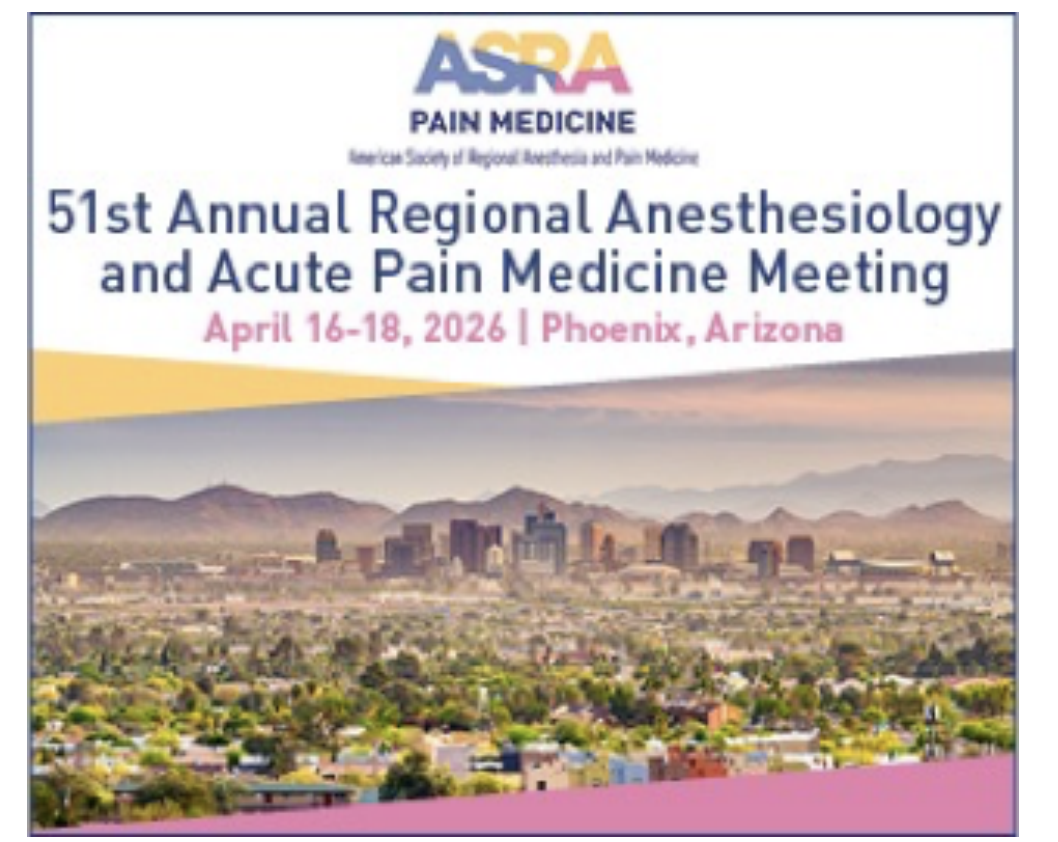


Giving A Boost: A Volunteer-Led Program Supporting Under-Resourced Medical School Applicants

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Background

- Paid medical school application consulting can create significant financial and competitive barriers for under-resourced students.
- *Giving a Boost (GAB)* was founded at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM) in 2019 to provide free, individualized advising to applicants unable to afford paid services.
- By addressing financial barriers in the application process, GAB aims to expand access to medical careers and provide early exposure to careers many pre-meds are otherwise unexposed to, including pain medicine and regional anesthesiology.
- Since its founding, GAB has expanded to 20+ medical schools nationwide, reflecting growing demand for cost-free support.

Methods

- Program evaluation of GAB - UPSOM Chapter
- '24-'25 application cycle, 154 mentees/applicants enrolled
- GAB support included personal statement review, school selection guidance, and general advising
- Optional end-of-cycle survey assessed acceptance outcomes, scholarship attainment, resource usefulness, and willingness to recommend GAB to their peers

Results

- 136 (**88%**) mentees reported they could not afford any paid consulting services

Key Outcomes (n=22)

- **91%** accepted to ≥1 medical school
- **68%** accepted to multiple medical schools
- **27%** received scholarships

Mean Usefulness ratings (1-10):

- Giving a Boost: **7.2**
- Friends: **6.0**
- Other Student Organizations: **5.2**
- Pre-health Advising Offices **4.8**

Willingness to Recommend GAB Services to a Peer: **9.5**

What Mentees Told Us:

- Desire for mock interviews earlier in the application cycle
- Many mentees engaged as needed, rather than continuously
- Interest in founding a GAB Chapter at their future medical school

Discussion

- Mentees reported a 91% acceptance rate, exceeding the national acceptance rate of 42.9%
- Findings support the value of structured, cost-free mentorship for applicants facing financial barriers
- Program enhancements now include expanded office hours and increased mentor participation across chapters
- In the context of declining chronic pain medicine fellowship applications nationally, early advising initiatives like GAB may help introduce pre-medical students to chronic pain medicine—as well as regional anesthesiology and acute pain medicine—fields they might otherwise have little opportunity to encounter.

Conclusion

- Giving a Boost fills a critical gap in the medical school application process by providing high-quality, no-cost mentorship to under-resourced applicants and supporting successful entry into the physician training pipeline.

Key References

- AAMC. *Applicants and Matriculants Data, 2016–2026*.
- Pritzlaff SG et al. Declining pain medicine fellowship applications, 2019–2024. *Pain Pract.* 2025;25(1):e13441.