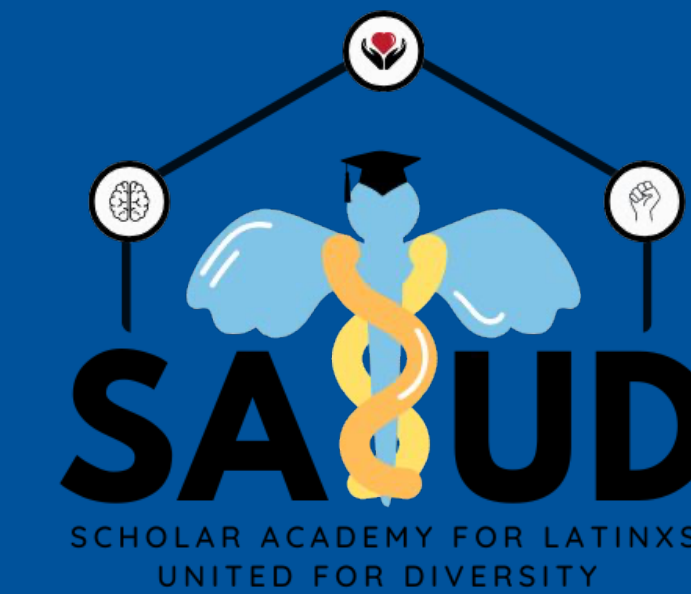




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CONNECTIONS

Bridging the Gap: Evaluating the Impact of the SALUD Program on Student Mentorship and College Readiness



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Background

The Problem



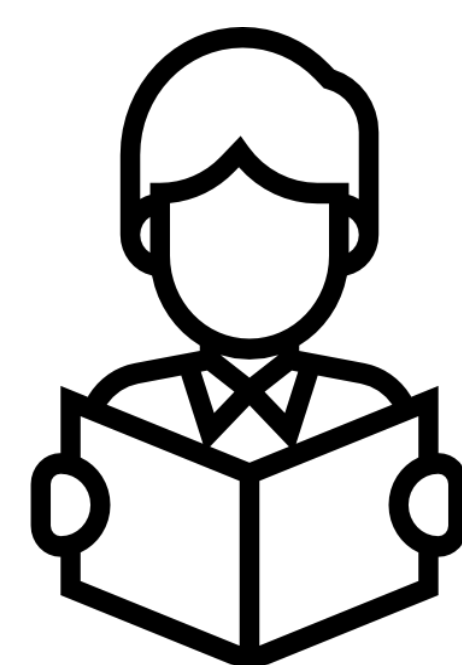
Latinx individuals hold just 7% of advanced degrees and 9% of healthcare roles (2021), despite making up ~19% of the U.S. population (1,2). Educating students on health disparities builds trust and improves outcomes, especially in underserved communities (3).

The Solution

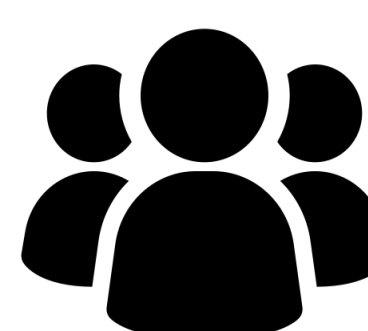
Founded in 2017, SALUD is now a biweekly spring program that uses a **health equity lens** to explore health careers, mentorship, and college access with high school students.



Faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates



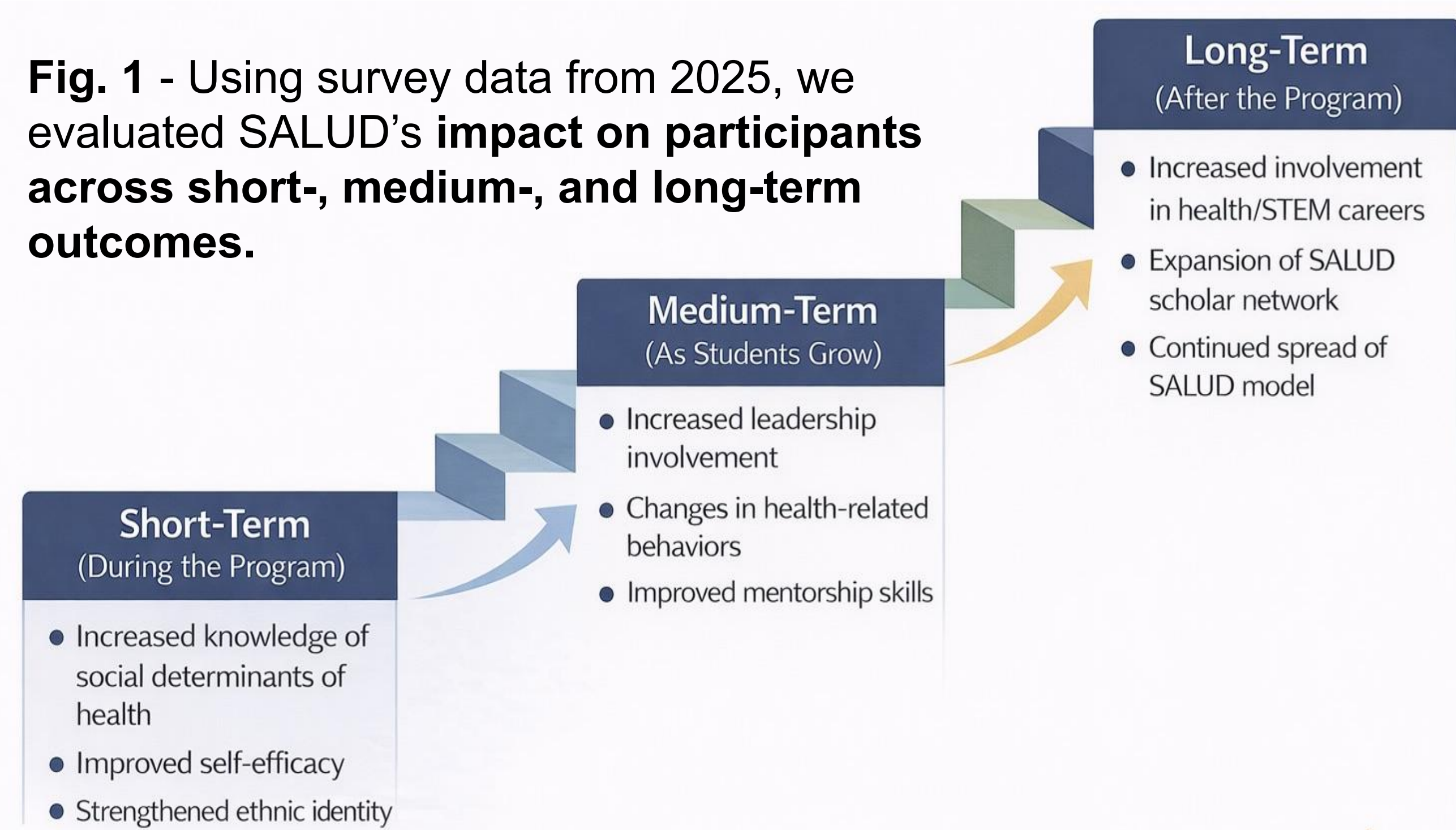
High School Scholars
(of all backgrounds)



Community Partners

Methods

Fig. 1 - Using survey data from 2025, we evaluated SALUD's **impact on participants across short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes**.



Data Analysis

- Data Visualization:** Matched pre/post surveys assessed gains in mentorship support, college readiness, and knowledge.
 - Surveys used Likert scales to assess outcomes
- Regression Analysis:** OLS models identified predictors of student improvement.

Evaluation

Data Visualization: How effective is SALUD?

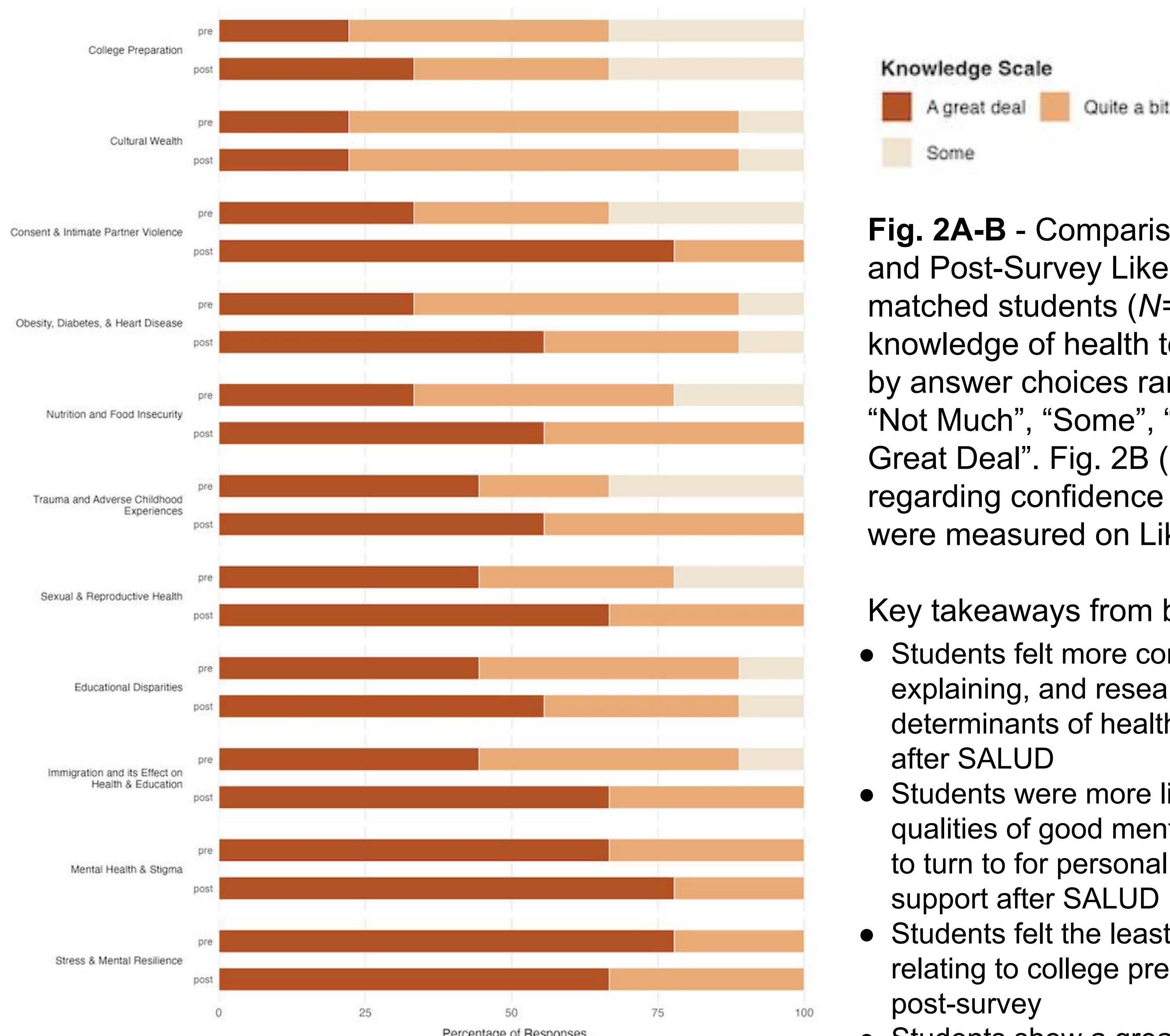


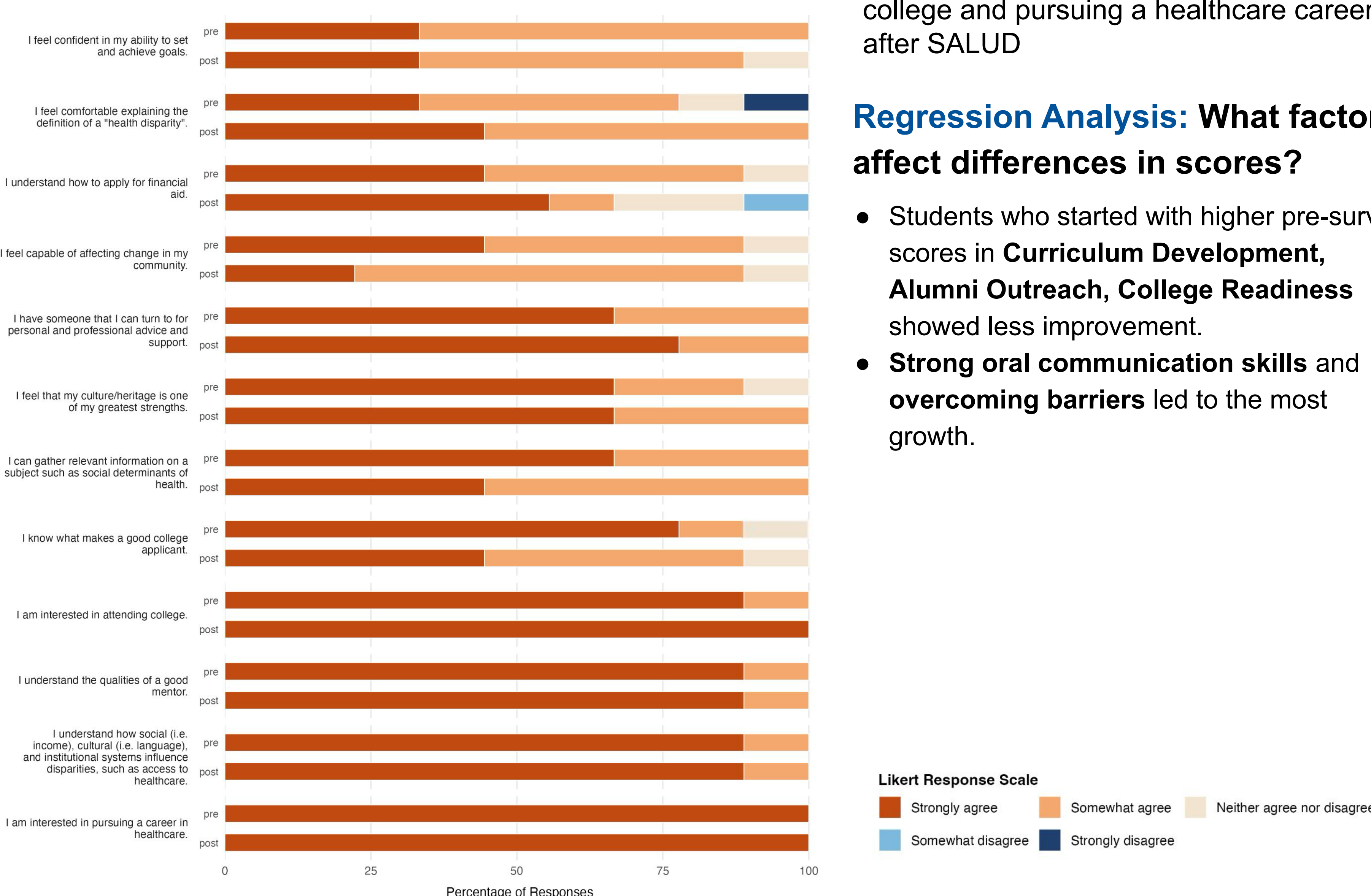
Fig. 2A-B - Comparison of Student Pre- and Post-Survey Likert responses for matched students (N=9). For Fig. 2A (top), knowledge of health topics was measured by answer choices ranging from “Nothing”, “Not Much”, “Some”, “Quite a Bit”, and “A Great Deal”. Fig. 2B (bottom) responses regarding confidence in various outcomes were measured on Likert scale.

Key takeaways from both include:

- Students felt more confident defining, explaining, and researching social determinants of health and health disparities after SALUD
- Students were more likely to understand the qualities of good mentors and have a mentor to turn to for personal and professional support after SALUD
- Students felt the least confident in topics relating to college prep and financial aid post-survey
- Students show a greater interest in attending college and pursuing a healthcare career after SALUD

Regression Analysis: What factors affect differences in scores?

- Students who started with higher pre-survey scores in **Curriculum Development, Alumni Outreach, College Readiness** showed less improvement.
- Strong oral communication skills and overcoming barriers** led to the most growth.



Conclusions

- SALUD helps student navigate academic and professional challenges.
- SALUD **effectively enhances knowledge in core program areas** including social determinants of health disparities, healthcare careers, and mentorship.
- There was still a gap in **writing, college preparation, and leadership confidence**.



Fig 3A-C - SALUD Sessions from Spring 2026.

Next Steps

- Track the career development of SALUD alumni in STEM fields and establish an **alumni network** for participants.
- Increase funding/coordinate with community partners to assist with participation barriers, such as a lack of transportation.
- Address and refine subjects with documented lower retention rates based on survey results.
- Refine curriculum into **grade-specific tracks** to ensure needs-based assistance.
 - We could also incorporate targeted interventions for students with lower pre-survey scores.
- Expand** the creation of similar pre-college and STEM enrichment programs in **other NC institutions**.

Acknowledgements & References

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Please contact saludprogram@gmail.com for any questions.

For references or more information, visit our website: <https://sites.duke.edu/salud/>

