

## Community Health Pathway

### *Overview:*

Students in this pathway will gain an understanding of the socioeconomic and environmental factors which contribute to the mal-distribution of health care resources and disparities in health, the importance of prevention and access to care, the factors outside of medical care that affect health, as well the financial and political underpinnings of our health care system. This pathway is designed to expose students to community-based medical settings; especially those that care for the medically underserved, and those without health insurance. This pathway will enhance clinical education through electives in public and private community clinics and health centers, public health departments, physicians' offices in low income communities, and schools.

### *Goals of the Program:*

- Assist students to develop an understanding of existing health care organizations, systems, and financing and their effect on community health.
- Provide students with high quality, hands-on clinical and service-based learning experiences at a variety of community based sites, including ambulatory, in-patient, and other health related services.
- Encourage students to develop a scholarly interest in community-based care by conducting a research or policy project in community health, public health or health policy.
- Assist students to understand potential cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic barriers to conventional treatment regimes and primary and preventive care.
- Assist students to understand the issues of disparity and public health.

### *Objectives:*

At the end of the program the student will be able to:

- Understand the health care safety net and different career and volunteer opportunities in community medicine and public health.
- Understand the many issues surrounding poverty and homelessness including our health care system, lack of affordable housing, and the community safety net that affect the health of at risk and vulnerable populations.
- Develop an understanding of the psychosocial, family and community issues of the patient that may affect his/her health; including the behavioral, environmental, and socioeconomic determinants.
- Develop an understanding of the agencies and organizations that benefit at risk individuals and the communities in which they live and work.

- Understand variations in the burden of disease, health status, disease patterns, and access to care and program and policy solutions to these problems.
- Understand and appreciate their own role in linking their work in the community to efforts at changing health care policy at all levels: local, state, and national.

*Components of the Program:*

**Mentored Project (Year II RSP)**

Each student will perform a community medicine or health policy project. At the beginning of Year II students will select a project sponsor and topic. This project will serve as the Year II Required Student Project. The student will be required to update his or her sponsor by providing quarterly updates. Students will be required to present their project in the form of a poster presentation on Medical Student Research Day (generally in May).

**Seminars**

Students will be required to attend four seminars in community medicine and health policy during Years I and II. The seminars will consist of lectures from invited speakers and group discussions. Topics will include: understanding the health care safety net, health care finance, health disparities, public health and prevention, health policy and health reform.

**Clerkships/Electives**

Students will spend the Family Medicine clerkship in a community clinic (i.e. Oscar Romero, Community Health Alliance of Pasadena). In addition, students will take an elective in Health Care Policy and Economics OR in a federally funded community health center or Indian Health Service.

*Achievement Timeline:*

Year I

- Declare Community pathway (Jan).
- Attend two seminars in Community Medicine and Health Policy designated as part of the Community Medicine Pathway.
- Develop concept of Year II RSP.

Year II

- Select project sponsor and topic.
- Required student project in Community Health or Policy.

- Attend two seminars in Community Medicine and Health Policy designated as part of the Community Medicine Pathway.
- Present Year II RSP on Medical Student Research Day.

Year III

- Family Medicine Clerkship in a community clinic or similar setting.

Year IV

- Students will choose one of the following:
  - Elective clerkship in a public or private community health center or Indian Health Service or other similar safety net provider.
  - Elective clerkship in Health Care Policy and Economics.

\*Advanced degree option

- Pursue an advanced degree in an area of interest.

***Student Evaluation:***

- Project sponsors will complete a mid-year and an end-of-year evaluation summary for each student.
- RSP summary paper will be evaluated by the project sponsor and PPM mentor.
- In order to get recognition on their Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE), students must meet all requirements of the community medicine pathway.
- Students who miss a mandatory seminar will be required to turn in a make-up assignment to the Curriculum Office.

***Program Evaluation:***

- Students formally evaluate sponsors on an annual basis. Supplemental questions may be included to evaluate the quality of the advisement. Opportunities to discuss the quality of the experience will be available and discussed with the sponsor.
- Students will annually complete a standardized, confidential pathway evaluation form.
- All participating students, the pathway director, and the steering committee will meet annually to discuss and evaluate the success of the program.
- The pathway director and the steering committee will annually review the program and all course materials.