These medical students are not waiting to make their impact felt

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Medical students don’t need to walk across the graduation stage to make an impact. Well before they become physicians, students are making their presence and their compassion felt in the lives of patients. That much is clear among the entrants of the 2021 AMA Accelerating Change in Medical Education Health Systems Science Student, Resident and Fellow Impact Challenge.

These medical student entrants stood out for their work that displayed health systems science skills that made a difference in the lives of patients, physicians and their communities during an unprecedented period for health care. To learn more, read Medical students, residents and fellows making an impact: Submissions to the 2021 AMA Accelerating Change in Medical Education Health Systems Science Student, Resident and Fellow Impact Challenge. (PDF)

Outreach to people without homes

Led by AMA member and medical student Monica Hana, Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) Street Health is a student-run clinic that offers free care to unhoused, uninsured and low-income individuals in Norfolk, Virginia. The project won first prize in the 2021 Impact Challenge.

The pandemic exacerbated dire conditions for those without homes in Norfolk. Street Health created a telehealth clinic involving medical students, residents, physicians and church volunteers to provide immediate medical services and coordinate future medical care for people without homes. Meals and medical services were largely provided through a local church, allowing volunteers and care providers to meet the patients closer to their geography.

“This has been an excellent learning experience for us students and a fantastic resource for our patients, filling significant gaps in their care,” the EVMS team wrote in describing the impact. “It has been an honor and privilege to care for our patients and tackle these problems as a community, all
while reinforcing our drive for pursuing medicine: helping people and communities live healthily.”

Learn how M1s and M2s are helping patients navigate complex medical systems.

**Screening for social determinants of health**

The University of Connecticut Health Leaders worked to create a model allowing for screening and addressing social determinants of health for patients at no cost while providing valuable education to pre-health professional students. Led by AMA member Henry Siccardi, a medical student at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, the group earned second prize.

The group is entirely student-run, with six college students and three medical students overseeing a team of 80 volunteers who largely come from historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups. Those volunteers screen patients for social determinants of health using a digital screening tool with validated questions.

Gain insight on three big ideas to improve diversity in medical education.

**Battling misinformation**

When it came to getting the right information out there during a global pandemic, the COVID Educational Support Team became a go-to source at the University of Chicago. The project earned an honorable mention from the 2021 Impact Challenge judges.

The student-run project, led by AMA member Naomi Tesema, a medical student at University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine, consisted of teams of librarians, attending physicians, residents, fellows and medical students. Those teams created infographics that reached widespread online audiences. And student members of the team taught first-year medical students how to critically assess scientific evidence and deeply consider patients’ perspectives to create infographics dispelling misinformation.

The AMA Accelerating Change in Medical Education initiative works across the continuum with visionary partners to create bold innovations. Learn about their efforts in undergraduate and graduate medical education, transformative resources for learners and educators, and national events that disseminate innovations to better train physicians to meet the needs of patients today and in the future.