

Students Embedded in Community Health Centers to Impact Health Disparities through Contextual Learning

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Innovation Identified

ATSU SOMA's project is focused on combining training in primary care and public health. Future providers will need to be able to address the needs of populations and focus on the people who seek care as well as those who do not. It is imperative that providers are trained to identify and address the many social and economic factors which affect health and wellness and should not be confined to the provision of medical services.

All of our second year students complete a community oriented primary care (COPC) project in conjunction with the community health center (CHC) at which they are placed. There are many steps to the development and implementation of these project. We provide step by step instructions in the form of a Toolkit that is ready to share with other programs who are interested in implementing similar projects for students or Residents at their institutions.

Toolkit contents:

Introduction to COPC	Proposal template and instructions
Project preparation guide	Poster resources
Needs assessment resources	IRB Application tips
Annotated bibliography guide	Grading Rubrics

Resources Needed and Potential Barriers

RESOURCES:

- Community partners - CHCs or organizations with a public health focus.
- Faculty mentors
- Staff support
- Statistician support- optional depending on projects.
- IRB - All projects must be submitted, many will be non-jurisdiction or exempt.
- COPC Project Toolkit: Request a copy at this link bit.ly/COPCtoolkit or scan the QR Code provided.

BARRIERS:

- Time
- Perceived need to study for THE BOARDS. Students may have competing needs and may not see educational "value" of projects.
- Administration may not recognize value of this type of scholarly work.
- Faculty perceptions of value may vary, thus finding space within curriculum can be difficult.

Need/Gap Addressed

- To develop the next generation of physician leaders who understand the process of needs assessment, project design, implementation and evaluation.
- Society's need for a population based approach to healthcare.
- Institutional need to involve faculty in scholarly work.
- To address/prevent burnout:
 - These projects are motivating to physicians who can see a direct impact on their patient population and health outcomes.
 - Projects fuel students' passion for making a difference, while teaching them critical elements of evidence based care and population health.
- The toolkit provides a step-by-step map with the instructions for each step broken into attainable parts, making the process of starting such work much easier.

Timeline Proposed - for a new COPC Project

Successful implementation of this type of project for an entire cohort will require some advance planning. Most importantly, no matter how clear the instructions, students need a significant amount of mentorship to be sure their projects are achievable and that process and outcomes are measurable.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

- Needs assessment: 4 weeks
- Proposal Development and Annotated Bibliography : 6 weeks
- Review: 1 – 2 weeks
- Final Proposal: 2 weeks
- Grading: 1 -2 weeks
- IRB Application: up to 4 weeks (early submissions encouraged)
- IRB Review: 1 week - 2 months
(depends on level of review required, IRB workload)
- Implementation: up to 4 months
- Data Analysis, Abstract and Poster Development: 4-6 weeks

Stakeholder Input

National Association of Community Health Centers:

- Exceptional student projects are selected for the NACHC Community Health Institute. Over the last 5 years, students have presented **58 posters** and **27 oral presentations**.
- "The community projects of ATSU SOMA students really do make a difference. A great example is their contribution by creating accurate models for screening, documenting and validating EHR data, actually moving the dial for colorectal cancer screening in health centers. They helped to improve the screening rate for health centers by 4% in just one year! Another SOMA community project helped to save lives by teaching community members how to reverse opioid overdoses. These projects help teach students great scientific study techniques, and also make a difference in the lives of the patients they serve".
– Ron Yee, MD, MBA, FAAFP, Chief Medical Officer, NACHC.

CHC Leadership:

- "Student and Resident community projects at El Rio have aligned with our ongoing quality innovation projects, underscored our commitment as an FQHC to overcome health care disparities and furthered our footprint of championing the social determinants of health as it relates to the well-being of our community."
–Douglas J Spegman, MD, Chief Clinical Officer at El Rio Community Health Center.

Class of 2018:

Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	n
I took an active role in my community project.	90.2 %	9.8 %	0.0%	100
The project provided me with insights into health related issues in the community.	82.3%	14.5%	3.2%	100
The project made me feel more connected to my community	73.8%	23.0%	3.2%	110

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Scan to Request the COPC toolkit:

