

Elective: Healthcare in Underserved Communities ENRH-149

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Director: Shawna Nesbitt, MD, MS

Faculty Sponsor: Patti Pagels, PA

Department: Office of Student Diversity & Inclusion

Student Liaisons: TBD

Committee Members: Anjali Chacko, Deena Habazi, Manasa Dutta, Eliza Ferrari, Natalie Bonner, Meera Devarajan

2. PURPOSE

This elective aims to introduce UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW) students to the healthcare issues faced by underserved populations via direct immersion in the patient population. It focuses on understanding the demographics of underserved communities, recognizing the structural barriers to healthcare, introducing students to the needs of the uninsured, and learning about the resources available in the Dallas area to meet those needs.

3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand and analyze the social determinants of health affecting underserved communities through one of the following immersion experiences:
 - *Navigating Public Healthcare (12 students max)*
 - *Correctional Health (12 students max)*
 - *Food and Nutrition Security (12 students max)*
 - *Women, Infants and Children (WIC) (12 students max)*
 - *Homeless Care (12 students max)*
 - *Gender Affirming Healthcare (8 students max)*
 - *HIV Care (8 students max)*
- Recognize the effects of health policy on care of the underserved
- Understand the limitations of healthcare implementation in an underserved population
- Investigate potential avenues to advocate for medically underserved populations

4. REQUIREMENTS

The class includes both a community project and class discussions with related topics of healthcare disparities.

A. Immersion Experience

Each student will be placed into a group of 8-12 students. Each group will be assigned a specific topic (see objectives) and participate in an “**immersion experience**” that involves an intimate patient interaction within a community healthcare organization to learn firsthand about their topic. These immersion experiences will begin in September and must be completed by the date of the group’s presentation (see below).

The required dedicated time for the projects will take 1-2 half days. However, students will have the option to further engage with their community organization or patient’s additional times throughout the month. ***Each student is expected to be flexible with his or her time as the organizations providing the immersion experiences are volunteering their time to help the class understand their careers, their work, and their patient population.***

B. Presentation

Each group will prepare and present a PowerPoint presentation during their assigned session to share their experience with the class. Larger groups will be divided into two subgroups that will each present a separate presentation. **Each presentation is NOT to exceed 20 minutes.** Each group should present their topic and is encouraged to include the some following:

- 1) *Background information:* What is the current state of health and healthcare in the population you studied?
- 2) *Overview of your immersion experience:* What did you do? Who did you work with? Provide statistics on the effect of your immersion experience organizations on their patient populations
- 3) *How the experience impacted you.* One or two students should describe how their experience impacted them. You may discuss:
 - a) Barriers and disparities you witnessed during your experience
 - b) How it affected your perception of this population (Did you recognize any biases within yourself?)
 - c) How it changed your outlook on how you will practice medicine as a future practitioner
 - d) Any other ways this experience may have impacted you, positively or negatively

- 4) *Investigate one potential and feasible advocacy event* which students of the class could participate in
 - a) The class will vote on and choose the preferred advocacy event and we will organize and schedule it as a class activity at the end of the semester
- 5) Only if your immersion experience has two subgroups: Identify some of the social or health policies that positively or negatively affected the healthcare of this patient population in the last 50 years

C. Reflection Essay

Each student will write a **short essay (1-2 pages double spaced)** reflecting on their immersion experience, explaining what they learned through the experiences, and how their perceptions/biases of a particular demographic were changed.

D. Class Attendance and Participation

You **must attend at least 6 out of the 8 sessions** to receive credit. The first and last session are **mandatory**.

Each class session will be structured with 20 minutes for student presentation, 10 minutes for Q&A, followed by 1 - 1.5 hour group discussion with medical professionals and patients.

Each member of a small group is required to participate in the group project and subsequent discussion during class. In order to make class discussions successful, we ask for everyone's participation to make the discussions engaging and fruitful.

E. Pre- and Post-Course Survey

Students will be **required to complete** a survey regarding learning goals pertaining to healthcare in underserved communities at the beginning and end of the course in order to receive credit. This survey will not be graded and will be anonymous. However, students are required to provide proof of submission of both surveys to the course director.

E. Student Evaluation

Grades will be pass / fail. Attendance is required to receive credit for the course.

5. OPTIONAL VOLUNTEER EVENTS

1. **Refugee Activities Fair volunteering at Heart House-** date and time will be announced in class.