

Office of Community Engagement



The mission of the Office of Community Engagement (OCE) is to integrate meaningful community service and reflective learning to prepare medical students to address socioeconomic determinants of disease and become community-responsive physicians.

Curricular:

Health Advocacy Practicum (HAP)

Community service is incorporated into the curriculum of Drexel University College of Medicine for all medical students. The Health Advocacy Practicum (HAP) course provides a year-long service-learning experience. Students gain health advocacy skills to support the well-being and resilience of individuals and their communities, particularly in the face of social adversity. Placements may be in community, residential or clinical settings serving one of the following populations: people experiencing homelessness, elders, youth at risk, people contending with medical illness or disability compounded by social vulnerability, or people returning home from incarceration. Through structured small group and independent learning activities, students examine social factors that perpetuate health disparities and injustices, leading to disproportionate injury, illness and premature death. At the same time, students explore strategies for bringing greater equity and healing for their future patients.

Health Advocacy 2 (HA2)

A sequel to the Year 1 Health Advocacy Practicum, HA2 takes a deeper dive into key social determinants of health. We take a structural view, inquiring into key economic, social and political structures that perpetuate health disparities and injustices that cause injury, accelerate disease and drive premature death. Students link structural challenges with strategies for more effective micro-advocacy (regarding individual patients); meso-advocacy (regarding neighborhoods and communities); and macro-advocacy (regarding health policy and societal change).

Fourth-Year Elective: Providing Health Care for Vulnerable Populations

Fourth year medical students have the opportunity to enhance their skills in collaborative, community-based clinical service for underserved populations through this elective.



The OCE fosters a culture of service and community involvement through a variety of activities:

Required courses: Year 1 - Health Advocacy Practicum (HAP) and Year 2 - Health Advocacy 2 (HA2)

Community health elective for fourth-year medical students

Health Outreach Project clinics

Longitudinal volunteer opportunities for students

Bridging the Gaps Community Health Internship Program



Get in touch!

Philadelphia

Steven Rosenzweig, MD

Director, Office of Community Engagement
sr454@drexel.edu

Elissa Goldberg, MSS, LSW

Program Director
ejg32@drexel.edu

Laura Mullin

Program Coordinator
lam479@drexel.edu

Sammy Brink, MS

HOP Senior Administrator
sb4496@drexel.edu

West Reading

Eugene York, MD

Course Director, Health Advocacy
Practicum (HAP)
epy26@drexel.edu

Lisa Glenn, MS

Academic Coordinator
lg868@drexel.edu

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office-of-community-
engagement/](https://drexel.edu/medicine/office-of-community-engagement/)

Non-curricular:

Health Outreach Project (HOP):

The mission of the Drexel University College of Medicine Health Outreach Project (HOP) is to work in partnership with the community to provide caring, nonjudgmental and interdisciplinary health services to individuals who have limited or no access to care. Through the Health Outreach Project (HOP), students have the opportunity to provide primary health services under the direct supervision of a licensed physician at several different sites in Philadelphia and the Reading area. Weekly clinics are maintained at the Salvation Army inpatient substance abuse treatment center, Eliza Shirley Shelter for homeless mothers and their children, the Streetside mobile clinic for intravenous drug users, The Arc of Philadelphia for adults with intellectual disabilities, and St. Raymond's, a home for formerly homeless individuals with chronic illness. HOP coordinates intermittent clinics at the Whosoever Gospel Mission, the Nationalities Services Center, HIV/Hep C screening clinics at Prevention Point

Philadelphia, and Narcan training throughout Philadelphia. HOP also coordinates health fairs, health education, mindfulness-based stress reduction and smoking cessation sessions in various settings. Clinics at the Reading Hope Rescue Mission, Women and Children's Shelter, Western Berks Free Clinic with Mary's Shelter and Faith Care Clinic are augmented by eye screening and neurology subclinics. Narcan distribution citywide in collaboration with the Council on Chemical Abuse is coordinated with Homeless Outreach with the Berks Coalition to End Homelessness. Telehealth medicine provides virtual visits. LGBT Center receives student assistance and growing Vaccine and NODA initiatives are in progress.

Community Visits and Other Volunteer Opportunities:

Drexel University College of Medicine regularly hosts group visits from nearby elementary and high schools. Medical

students lead tours, and often serve as guides to the visitors in the labs. Each year, more than 200 visitors tour the Philadelphia and West Reading campuses. Medical students also regularly volunteer at community health fairs and local high schools and colleges to talk about their experience as medical students and their journey to medical school.

Bridging the Gaps Community Health Internship Program (BTG-CHIP):

The Bridging the Gaps Community Health Internship Program is a seven-week paid summer internship for graduate-level students in the health disciplines. The program provides non-clinical health-related services to underserved populations, while incorporating interdisciplinary training on the psychosocial issues affecting health and the delivery of health care.