

**Project Title:** Harnessing the power of the social sciences to transform health and healthcare delivery

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**Background/Significance of the project:** Our society spends billions of dollars on scientific discovery but very little attention is paid to implementing these discoveries equitably. Human behavior -- including the behavior of patient and clinicians -- is the final common pathway to transform health and healthcare equitably. Northwestern Medicine includes a premier integrated academic health system with eleven hospitals and the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. There is an untapped opportunity to harness the power of the incredible bench of social scientists who are on faculty at Feinberg School of Medicine (FSM), experts in implementation science, behavioral science, psychology, economics, and more to shape patient, clinician, and organizational behavior to transform health and healthcare equitably and to achieve impact at scale. Substantial headwinds in healthcare – COVID-19, capacity constraints, changing payer mixes, and a workforce crisis – necessitate growing bridges between the social sciences and healthcare delivery to deliver the best patient experience, high quality care, and to produce generalizable knowledge and a national model.

**Purpose/Goal/Objectives of the project:** The goal of this project is to (1) explore potential opportunities to deepen partnerships between Feinberg School of Medicine faculty who conduct applied social science work and key partners in the health system; (2) to identify key infrastructure that will be needed to embed faculty within the health system to pursue applied questions; and (3) select and deliver on several opportunities to demonstrate the potential of this approach.

**Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy:** To achieve the goals of this project, I undertook the following approach.

- 1) Create map to understand partners and constituents in FSM and NM
- 2) Conduct listening tour to better understand the context and priorities
- 3) Understand barriers, facilitators, and lessons learned from previous partnerships
- 4) Present on opportunity to different groups of key constituents
- 5) Identify high-value opportunities to partner on to demonstrate the potential of this approach
- 6) Evaluate success using short-term and long-term process and outcome measures

**Outcomes/Results to date:** Short-term outcomes include (1) identification of partners and constituent groups, (2) number of individual meetings, (3) number of presentations given, and (4) identification of high value opportunities. Intermediate outcomes include (1) number of new partnerships between scientists in FSM and health system partners; (2) new grants funded; and (3) creation of infrastructure to routinize the approach. Long-term outcomes include (1) established infrastructure and scientists working in partnership with health system partners around key initiatives; (2) improved access, equity, and quality of care, and improved clinician and care team wellness. Thus far, only short-term outcomes have been gleaned and include the creation of the partner map, over 25 meetings with key partners in the health system and medical school, 3 presentations to health system leadership, and the identification of three potential high-value opportunities.

**Discussion/Summary/Conclusion:** Harnessing the power of the social sciences to transform health and healthcare delivery equitably aligns both the clinical and research missions of Northwestern Medicine. The impact of this initiative will be experienced across the system, achieve impact at scale, and can serve as a national model.