MISSION

The Community Health Fellowship Program (CHFP) introduces first-year medical students to community-based participatory research (CBPR), and emphasizes the importance of collaboration in addressing community health problems in underserved communities.

The program gives students an opportunity to:
• Address the health care needs of inner-city, at-risk and underserved patients
• Obtain real world clinical experience treating patients under the direction of a mentor
• Gain applied research knowledge through a combination of classroom training and a community health agency-based research project

DESCRIPTION

The CHFP is offered for nine (9) weeks during the summer. Some additional sessions are required in April and May to solidify community projects and equip students with basic HIPAA research and human-subjects training prior to the summer program.

The fellowship provides a stipend, and a limited amount of funding is also available for presenting research findings at a national or regional professional meeting.

CHFP research projects are designed to help community-based organizations:
• Identify the needs of those they serve
• Investigate how well those needs are being met
• Evaluate additional resource needs
• Collect information that can be used to obtain additional resources

Research is intended to benefit the participating organizations. Medical students are equipped with CBPR research skills and learn the value of collaboration in achieving optimal health outcomes among the underserved.

REQUIREMENTS

To enroll in the CHFP, students must:
• Be a first-year medical student
• Submit an application

Students do not have to be enrolled in the Community Action Research Track (CART) program to be considered for the CHFP, but all students interested in CART are strongly encouraged to apply for the fellowship if they are seeking a comprehensive community-based learning experience.

If you are interested in participating in the program, please complete the CHFP Student Application Form and return it by the February 15 deadline. Please e-mail the form to Alvin.Dawson@utsouthwestern.edu.
PAST PROJECTS

Here are some examples of recent research projects from CHFP fellows:

• In collaboration with GRACE Outreach Community Clinic, a CHFP fellow examined perception, knowledge and behaviors in both patients and health care providers in Grapevine, Texas, related to obesity among Hispanics. An ethnographic approach based on interviews and observations was used to collect data. Interviews with patients identified perceptions and explanatory models for being overweight and for obesity, as well as behaviors related to the management of patient body weight. The study further assessed how medical professionals interacted with these patients at the time of the patient visit.

• Partnering with Paso del Norte Foundation, a medical student assessed knowledge and behaviors toward mental health care in relation to depression among Mexican-American women in a colonia outside of El Paso, Texas. The study also identified socio-demographic and physical health conditions associated with the prevalence of depression. A face-to-face questionnaire was administered to a random sample of households in the Montana Vista community. In addition, patient charts from the Montana Vista Community Partnership Clinic were analyzed to evaluate the number of patients seeing treatment for depression at the clinic.

• A medical student worked with the New Connections Family Intervention program to determine the attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and knowledge regarding childhood obesity among participating mothers. A short survey assessed current parental behavior, attitudes and beliefs regarding nutrition and exercise (both for themselves and their children); current parental knowledge of proper nutrition and exercise; and parental attitudes toward learning additional information about proper nutrition and exercise.

Nora Gimpel, M.D. • Program Director and Chief, Community Health Section
Nora.Gimpel@utsouthwestern.edu

Al Dawson, MA • CART Program Coordinator
Alvin.Dawson@utsouthwestern.edu