



Community Action Research Track (CART)

Department of Family and Community Medicine
Community Health

UT Southwestern
Medical Center

CART Program Overview

The Community Action Research Track (CART) is an innovative response to the need for integrating Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), population medicine, health promotion/disease prevention and the social determinants of health into the medical school curriculum. Students enrolled in CART participate in a coordinated program of instruction, electives, and service-learning opportunities over four years. Through these experiences medical students contribute to improving health in the underserved communities where they train. The program links the medical school to the community and introduces students to the population health perspective through active community engagement and collaboration.

Purpose

The purpose of the CART program is to prepare future physicians to be aware of social, psychological, economic and cultural determinants of health by participating in comprehensive service-learning experiences.

This approach emphasizes the need for population-based strategies incorporating the principles of health promotion and disease prevention, in order to promote optimal health outcomes for all regardless of age, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income or educational level. The CART program provides students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to effectively improve and maintain the health of all people, and in a way that allows students to contribute to reducing and eliminating health disparities among the underserved. The objectives of the program are:

- To develop, implement and evaluate a longitudinal training curriculum for medical students to improve health in the underserved communities where they train.
- To teach medical students the fundamentals of community-based and practice-based research while serving the community.
- To respond to the need for integrating Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), population medicine, health promotion/disease prevention and the social determinants of health into the medical school curriculum.

Curriculum

The program provides a longitudinal experience for medical students over four years. It consists of seven (7) CBPR-specific experiences that define the core curriculum; preclinical electives; community medicine elective rotation; online training and 20 hours (yearly) of community service activities.

All students completing the required experiences receive a "Certificate of Knowledge in Community Medicine," presented by the Community Health Section in the Department of Family and Community Medicine.

CORE Workshops and Seminars

The seven CORE Workshops and seminars include (1) Community-Based Participatory Research, (2) Social Determinants of Health (3) Population Medicine, (4) Cultural Competency, (5) Health Literacy, (6) Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and (7) Introduction to Public Health.

Courses are developed and presented by faculty and guest speakers providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to critically evaluate the major issues in prevention and introduce medical students to the psychosocial and political dimensions of health. The seminars provide an opportunity to explore the difference and complementary nature of individual-based and population-based strategies for prevention and provide the

basic features of the U.W. health care and public health system. Students investigate linkages between disease burdens and the social, economic and cultural contexts.

(All students enrolling in the program are required to attend these seminars.)

Pre-Clinical Electives

UTSW medical students are offered a wide selection of elective experiences from which to choose. These electives consist of 10-12 contact hours per course and are evaluated and approved by the UTSW Curriculum Committee. During either their first or second year of training, students will be able to participate in any of the following electives: Community Service Learning, Designing Health Care Solutions, Global Health, Health Care Economics, Healthcare in Underserved Communities, International Service Learning, Medicine and Social Inequality, Public Health and Epidemiology or Women's Health. There may be others outside the list above but the track director, Dr. Gimpel, must approve that elective.

(All students enrolling in the program are required to participate in at least one of the preclinical electives.)

Community Medicine Elective

This four-week elective provides students with practice-oriented and/or service-oriented learning opportunities related to community medicine. The course is designed to be individualized to students' specific population-medicine interests, and is predominantly experiential, with students completing rotations in local, state, national, or international health care settings and agencies. Students generally rotate through training experiences that go beyond clinical medicine and encompass environmental, public health, and multidisciplinary efforts to improve the health status of individuals.

(All students enrolling in the program are required to complete the Community Medicine elective.)

Community Service Core

All students participate yearly in community-based service projects designed to contribute useful health-related service to the community. Completed projects promote effective community partnerships that allow students to provide medical and nonmedical service to the community that might otherwise not be available, while reinforcing student's commitment to serving those in need. Examples of activities include: United to Serve Fair, The Monday Clinic, Immunizations Fair, etc.

(All students enrolling in the Program are required to complete at least 20 hrs. per year of Community Service activities.)

Online Training – All courses available to CART students through [D2L](#)

Required courses are:

Community Engagement Training through Duke University

Healthcare for the Homeless through the National Health Care for the Homeless Council

A Physician's Practical Guide to Culturally Competent Care – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Project Implicit Bias (activity to reveal biases)

Research/IRB Training through CITI Program

- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Human Subject Protections

(All students enrolling in the program are required to complete at least 1 online training per year.)

Other Activities

CART students are encouraged to attend other activities occurring in the University that follow the principles of population medicine and community health such as Ethics Grand Rounds, special speakers or student group events.

Program Contacts

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