

# **Breaking Barriers: An innovative approach to teaching social determinants**

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# Disclosures

- We have no conflict of interest in relation to this program/presentation

# Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Describe educational methods for teaching the significance and impact of social determinants on health and healthcare delivery.
- Facilitate students' ability to problem solve when caring for underserved patients within a setting of limited resources.
- Engage learners in the acquisition of skills to effectively work with patients who have multiple barriers to accessing care.
- Develop a framework of curricular strategies and components to incorporate social determinants of health into an educational module.

# **Barriers to Accessing Care and Social Determinants of Health Curriculum**

- Part of an 8 week course for first year med students.
- 2-4 hours of lectures and 2 hours of small group sessions (8 students and facilitator) per week

# Barriers to Accessing Care and Social Determinants of Health Curriculum

- Course addresses psychosocial aspects of medicine including shared decision making, health literacy, motivational interviewing, death and dying, intimate partner violence, **social determinants of health, barriers to accessing health-care**

- *“This block effectively tackled relevant topics concerning patient centered care, while taking into account the diverse backgrounds of patients and the equally diverse problems they face. I feel like IPC3 has certainly helped to me to be a more tactful and competent physician.”*

# Overview of the social determinants of health curriculum

- 10 chairs exercise
- 1 hour lecture
- 40 min documentary on social determinants
- Reflective writing with written feedback
- 2 hour interactive small group
- Role play with simulated patient as part of evaluation



# 10 Chairs Exercise on the Distribution of Wealth





# Lecture

- Distribution of wealth
- Spectrum of barriers to accessing care
- Data on uninsured
- Cultural, language, literacy barriers
- Criteria for Medicaid coverage
- Minimum wage
- Clinical scenarios of individuals unable to access care
- What physicians can do to make a difference

*"I also appreciated the focus on the realistic aspects of medicine, focused in Columbia and mid-Missouri - this made the information especially applicable and useful."*

# Documentary on Social Determinants of Health and Reflection

- *Unnatural Causes...Is inequality making us sick*
- Written reflection

# Unnatural Causes...is inequality making us sick?

- 4 hour documentary series exploring America's racial and socioeconomic inequalities in health
- We show ~40 min of episode called "In Sickness and In Wealth"



# Reflection on social determinants of health

- Students are asked to write 2-3 paragraphs in response to the prompt:

***“Reflect on the social determinants of health in your life and how they have affected your life options and personal health.”***

- Facilitators provide short written feedback to each of the 8 students in the small group

*“One interesting thing this video taught me was the concept of “excess death.” Because of various demographic factors, individuals in our nation die of preventable illnesses many years before they are supposed to. For example, the video showed that someone from the upper 1% can easily live 20 years longer with an illness another individual from the lower 90% has as well. This discrepancy, and many others, displays the vagrant social gap that exists in our nation which prevents citizens from accessing adequate resources that are vital for their health.”*

*“I found it quite saddening and frustrating that a person of lower status would not only suffer the hardships of struggling to make ends meet but permanent health consequences as well. I found this entirely unfair, especially as those same individuals are likely the most un- or underinsured. I found the video quite eye-opening, and am sad that it took watching it for me to realize it.”*



# **Interactive Small Group**

- 8 students and a facilitator
- 2 hour session
- An opportunity to discuss how literacy, language, finances, transportation, limited resources, Medicaid guidelines, and conflicting obligations impact access to health care

# Interactive Small Group overview

- **“What are your priorities?”** 2 scenarios involving setting priorities when a family’s resources are limited (30 min each)
- **“Bus Map Exercise”** Students play the role of an uninsured single mother attempting to get health care (1 hr)

# **Small group**

## **What are your priorities?**

- Break into small groups of 3-4
- Read scenario 1
- Work together to decide what your priorities would be in this setting
- Take ~3 minutes to discuss and be prepared to justify your answers

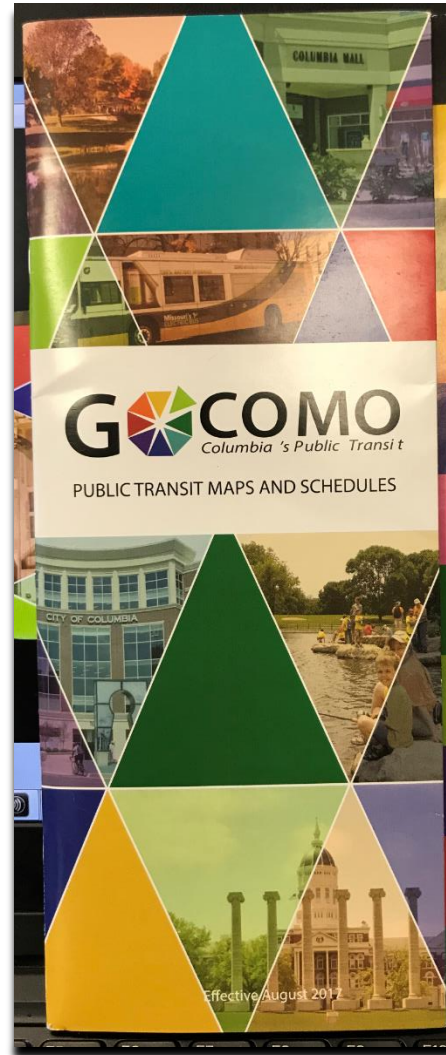
## **Small group**

# **What are your priorities?**

- What were the biggest tradeoffs?
- How might their situation change if they had more financial flexibility?
- If they chose not to attend the well child check, how might the clinic, doctor or others view their decision?

# Small group Bus Map Exercise

- The students play role of an uninsured single mother
  - seen in the ER for pneumonia and an asthma exacerbation.
  - given scripts for costly medications she can't afford.
  - able to get a follow up appointment at the FQHC.



# Small Group Bus Map Exercise

- The students use local transit maps to figure out how to accomplish a series of tasks



# Small group Bus Map Exercise

- “Your bus is late. You are told you need to reschedule your clinic appointment. You have been in transit for two hours with your 4 year old daughter, you are sick, and your daughter is getting fussy...”



# Bus Map Exercise

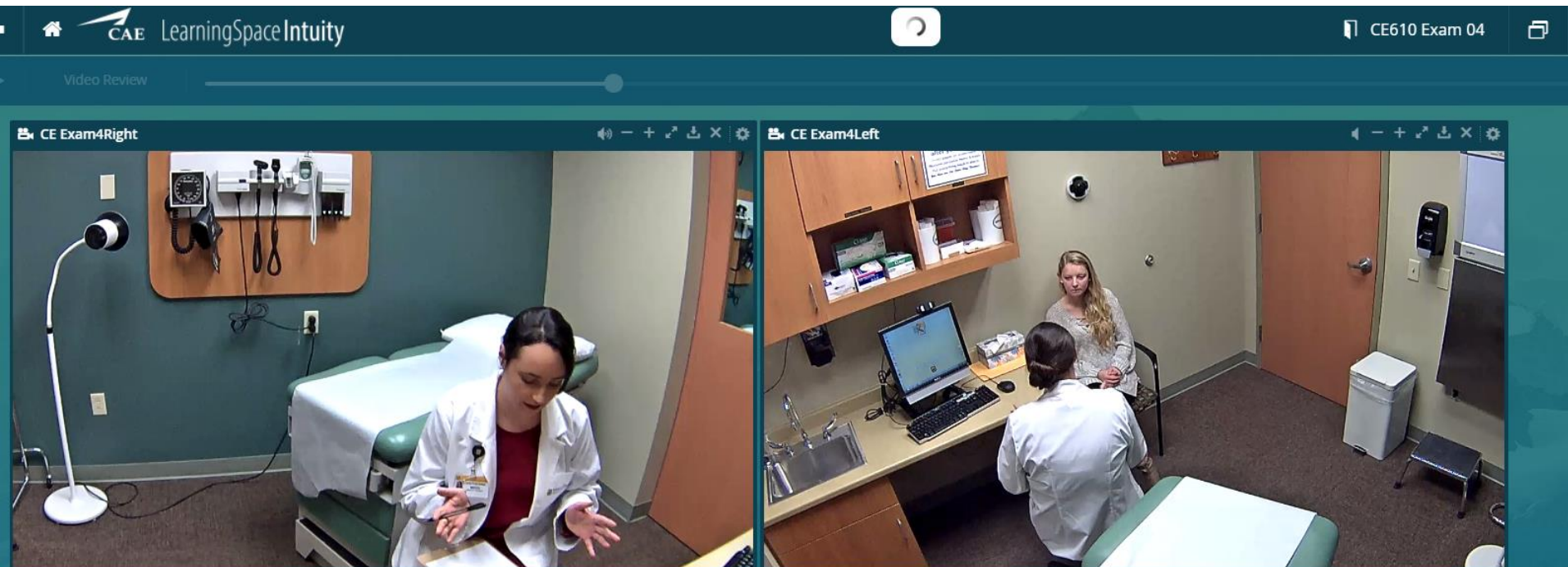
- “How would this be different if....
  - You had health insurance that would have paid for the medicines you were prescribed in the ER?
  - You had been able to regularly see your doctor for management of your asthma?
  - The ER doctor had prescribed less expensive medications or had given you samples?
  - You had a reliable car?”

*“I think some of the activities were very helpful in giving us a new perspective, particularly the health disparities activity in which we had to prioritize different goals and also use the bus map to figure out a route to get to and from the clinic. I am really grateful that we have an opportunity to be exposed to these topics before we are in a situation in which we actually have to use these skills.”*

# Evaluation

- Short answer exam
- Simulated patient encounter

# Case: Annie Green



# **Simulated Patient Exam**

- Link to student video

# Complementary Components of the Curriculum

- Health literacy (lecture and small group)
- Shared Decision Making (lecture and small group)
- Health Disparities (2 lectures)
- Culturally Effective Care (lecture)
- “Worlds Apart” documentary related to culture and health disparities
- Modeling how to work with an interpreter
- History of health care discrimination (lecture)

# Think, Pair, Share


- Think of how you might incorporate this into your curriculum
- Break into groups of 2
- Share with a partner



# Resource Guide

- Kaiser Family Foundation
- US Census Data
  - Quick Facts
  - Small Area Health Insurance Estimates
  - American Community Survey
- CDC – National Health Interview Survey
- US Dept Health and Human Services – Poverty Guidelines
- Families USA
- Commonwealth Fund
- County Health Rankings
- Urban Institute

# Questions?

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