

Creating a Medical Student Health Advocacy Program

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PURPOSE:

- The medical system calls upon physicians to become leaders for their communities because they are in a powerful and respected position to advocate for the better health of their patients. However, a lack of formal training, mentoring, and practical experience within medical education paradoxically discourages future physicians from taking part in such health advocacy roles
- A health advocacy program was created at for MS1's to integrate health advocacy early on in medical education



"Advocating through the Media"

- How to engage with the media, speak with reporters, and 'craft' a sound bite
- Recorded students doing mock interviews with instant feedback and critique of skills.

Small Groups

METHODS/RESULTS:

- Ten students (about 10% of the student class) were selected and instructed in health advocacy over 6 months
- A combination of didactic-based and hands-on experiences: lectures, small groups sessions, health advocacy projects with one-on-one mentorship
- Involving all different levels of advocacy: individual, community, and state/national level

"Advocating for your Patient"

- Communicating with patients in need of advocacy
- Review community advocacy organizations



Lectures

"Identifying the Community's Advocacy Needs"

- Why to partner with the community
- How to communicate with the community



Projects with Mentoring

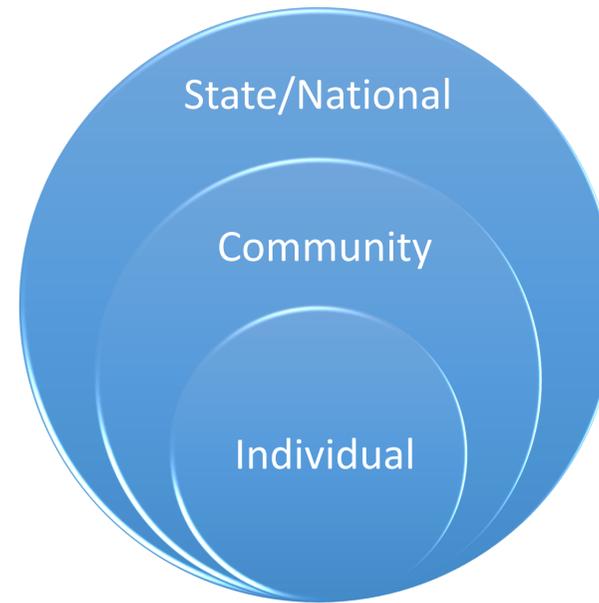


Child and Adolescent Health

- Student grew an internet radio station focused on pediatric health into an FM station

Homelessness

- Student used mentor connection to develop a research project on homelessness advocacy and presented at a national conference



LEVELS of HEALTH ADVOCACY

CONCLUSIONS:

- A significant percentage of students are interested and receptive to health advocacy training early on in their medical training.
- Through formal education and hands-on training, students can be empowered with advocacy skills that lead to beneficial outcomes for the students, their patients, and their communities.



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