Title: Building Health Equity in Impoverished Communities

Submission Type: Sessions on Medical Education

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Topic Short Description: Physicians working in impoverished communities struggle daily with the social determinants of health. Although medical efforts have traditionally concentrated on downstream interventions to improve individual health, there has been increased awareness of the benefits of addressing the upstream social determinants of health. Physicians and medical education training programs have a unique ability to step out of the practice setting to develop grassroots inter-professional partnerships with others in the local community to effectively impact community health.

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Learning Objectives: 1. Discuss how addressing the social determinants of health can improve health equity in impoverished communities2. Describe the benefits of collaborative inter-professional partnerships between physicians and the community to create a local community Culture of Health3. Explore various ways in which physicians can partner with other professionals in their local community to improve the health of the community 4. Identify web-based tools, apps, and curricular activities that can be used to develop and implement inter-professional community partnerships

Session Plan: Topic: Primary care providers and specialists who work in impoverished communities struggle daily with the social determinants of health, with up to sixty percent of premature deaths estimated to result from social, economic, or environmental factors, rather than from shortfalls in
medical care or genetic factors (1). Medical efforts have traditionally concentrated on downstream interventions to improve individual health, focusing on strategies such as improving individual access to care and increasing individual health knowledge in an attempt to decrease high-risk behaviors such as smoking. However, as efforts to improve health equity across the United States have intensified, there has been increased awareness of the benefits of addressing the upstream social determinants of health that can ultimately influence individual health behaviors and health status (2, 3). Physicians and residency training programs thus have a unique ability to step out of the practice setting to develop inter-professional partnerships with others in the community in order to build local community Cultures of Health (4), effectively impacting health on a larger scale within their communities. Pediatricians have traditionally taken the lead in these advocacy efforts (5), however, such efforts cannot be limited to pediatricians alone. It is thus incumbent upon physicians regardless of practice type to develop grassroots inter-professional partnerships within their local communities in an effort to improve community health (6, 7). Such advocacy efforts require the learning of new skills which need to be instilled into physician training, beginning with medical school and continuing into residency. During this session, medical educators and learners, physician advocates, and community partners will discuss how to develop and implement inter-professional community partnerships, and how to incorporate these partnerships into medical training.1. Introduction (15 min): Facilitated discussion of the role that the social determinants of health play in impoverished communities, including how addressing the upstream social determinants of health can improve health equity within these communities, and the need to incorporate this training into undergraduate and graduate medical education programs. Discussion will be built around the experiences of a current 3rd year medical student and an 11th grade student, both of whom have been recipients of inter-professional community partnerships between UCSF-Fresno Department of Medical Education and the Fresno Unified School District. 2. Interactive large group discussion (15 min): Facilitated discussion on what constitutes a Culture of Health, the recognition that the social determinants of health cannot be solved by physicians alone thus leading to the critical importance of intra-community participation, and a discussion of the different ways in which physicians can develop inter-professional partnerships within the local community to facilitate advocacy efforts.3. Small group discussions (30 min): Workshop participants will be broken down into small groups to identify issues that impact health in their own communities. Each group will utilize the Community Project Planning Tool to guide them through the process of identifying a local community issue, creating mission and vision statements, identifying potential partners, and discussing how to engage potential partners to develop community health partnerships with shared goals and objectives. 4. Report out to other groups and large group discussion (15 min): Tables will report out to the other groups on their discussions, either to the group as a whole or via pair-share with other tables, depending upon the size of the audience. Other web-based tools, apps, and curricular activities that can be employed to assist with these projects will be identified, briefly discussed, and a list and brief description of each of these tools will be provided to participants.