



HEALTHCARE ACCESS INITIATIVE

The Germination Project is a first of its kind leadership incubator dedicated to creating an ecosystem of civic engagement in the Philadelphia region by identifying, connecting and cultivating a select group of Philadelphia's most talented high school students. Designed to expand the horizons of its student fellows, the Germination Project seeks to foster an abiding sense of civic citizenship among these young leaders. To achieve this goal, a primary component of the Germination Project experience is active participation in an ongoing service initiative. In its inaugural year, the subject of the service initiative will be accessible healthcare, and the Germination Project will partner with Jefferson University Health System to establish a mobile health clinic (MHC) targeting Philadelphia's most underserved communities. Student fellows of the Germination Project will work with volunteer doctors, nurses and medical professionals, as well as with community liaisons, to plan and implement the MHC, and will engage directly with the individuals benefitting from its services.

The Need for Healthcare Access

Despite the presence of five medical schools in Philadelphia, along with more than 80 health centers within city limits, vast numbers of Philadelphians face significant obstacles to health care access, including costs of care, inadequate insurance, limited primary care capacity, and disparate geographic availability of services. According to a 2014 Community Health Assessment conducted by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, nearly 20% of Philadelphians are uninsured and report cost-related barriers to care. Philadelphia is the poorest of America's 10 largest cities; according to recent census data, one third of all residents and 40% of children live below the poverty line. Not surprisingly, the high incidence of poverty in Philadelphia not only creates barriers to health care access for many of its citizens but correlates strongly with a host of health problems for these vulnerable individuals and communities.

For too many low-income Philadelphians, the abundant medical service facilities and resources that this city boasts are simply out of reach, whether due to geographic and transportation barriers or prohibitions of cost. As a consequence, otherwise preventable health problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, and tobacco-related cancers plague Philadelphia at disproportionately high rates compared with other American cities. The Germination Project's

mobile health clinic, engineered through the collaboration of its student fellows and Jefferson University health professionals, seeks to improve access to healthcare and information for all who call Philadelphia home. By travelling to underserved communities and leveraging the influence of local clergy, neighborhood leaders, and other grassroots organizations, Germination Project student fellows and Jefferson medical professionals will provide valuable basic clinical healthcare services and information to hundreds of Philadelphians.

Initial Planning

Student fellows will play an active role at every step of the Germination Project Healthcare Access Initiative. With guidance from Jefferson partners, as well as from public health experts from both the public and private sectors, Students will conduct research into Philadelphia's 18 planning districts and prepare a district-by-district survey of the most pressing health issues affecting residents. Students will also analyze demographic and geographic statistical indicators across planning districts in order to determine where in a given district the MHC is most likely to provide healthcare and information access to the greatest number of people. Based on the results of these initial research components, students and partner professionals will develop a triage action plan (TAP), that will serve as an itinerary, schedule and roadmap for the MHC's tour through Philadelphia's neighborhoods.

Outreach

Following the creation of the TAP, Germination project student fellows will design and implement a coordinated outreach campaign to promote the MHC's visits to strategically selected sites throughout Philadelphia. Students will begin by seeking out community leaders (e.g. clergy, block captains, neighborhood association administrators) in those selected neighborhoods who are willing to help promote the MHC, encourage community members to visit the MHC, and where feasible, offer a location (e.g. a church, synagogue, mosque, or recreation center) for the MHC to conduct its services. As part of the outreach phase of the initiative, students will be encouraged to contact City Council members, ward leaders and party committee persons whose jurisdictions coincide with the strategically selected sites identified during the TAP development process. This component of the initiative will give student fellows an opportunity to engage directly with local elected officials as they work to amplify the reach and impact of the MHC.

Training

In the weeks leading up to the launch of the MHC, student fellows will attend a series of wide-ranging trainings and seminars. These sessions will both prepare students for their interactions with community members at the MHC and offer a deeper insight into issues of health and healthcare in Philadelphia. Though student fellows will not be administering health care or advice at the MHC, the Jefferson doctors, nurses and other professionals who have volunteered to administer those services will conduct seminars on a variety of subjects pertinent to the communities the MHC seeks to serve. For example, students will learn about the behavioral

and environmental causes of hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, pulmonary disorders and other ailments prevalent among Philadelphians likely to seek services from the MHC. Public Health experts will also conduct seminars on the intersection of race, class, socioeconomic status and other factors with health issues, in order to provide students fellows with a context for their interactions with MHC clients and to illustrate a macro-level picture of the healthcare challenges facing large urban centers around the country.

In addition to the medical and sociological education students receive at this phase of the initiative, they will also be taught practical skills that they will soon thereafter be expected to apply at the MHC. Experts in corresponding fields will provide training to student fellows in database creation and maintenance, marketing and financial management, survey construction and data analysis and client interviewing.

Field Work

Following the training period, Germination Project student fellows will accompany Jefferson's volunteer medical professionals to each MHC site designated under the TAP. At the MHC sites, the student fellows will serve as the primary "day-of" point of contact with the community liaison hosting the MHC. Student fellows will coordinate on-site logistics, conduct initial intake interviews with clients, log data for subsequent analysis and provide appropriate assistance to the medical professionals on site. Volunteer medical professionals will provide, at no cost to the MHC's clients, basic check-ups and physical exams, consultations regarding individual health issues on a case-by-case basis, literature and other information on best health practices, and other medical services as time and circumstance permit. At the end of each day-long MHC session, the student fellows and volunteer medical professionals will work together to disassemble and clean up the site.

Impact

Upon the conclusion of the MHC on-site sessions, student fellows, working in groups of two or three, will be tasked with preparing comprehensive impact statements on the project. These statements will include quantitative and qualitative analyses of the MHC, statistical assays based on intake interviews and services rendered (in each case, in compliance with all patient privacy regulations), individual impressions of the experience, and a substantive evaluation of the project with recommendations for improvements and best practices. The impact statements will be reviewed and evaluated by Jefferson partners and other Germination Project faculty, and if suitable, published for the benefit of health professionals and Philadelphians at large.

Through its institutional partnership with Jefferson University Health System, the Germination Project's Healthcare Access Initiative will be singular opportunity for student fellows to gain an unparalleled access into dimensions of this city that they might never otherwise encounter, to acquire new skill sets with a wide range of applicability, and perhaps most importantly, to begin making good on their commitment to pay it forward in Philadelphia.