The Stanford Emergency Department Help Desk
Addressing the Social Determinants of Health through Community-Campus Partnerships
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**Project Description**

Emergency Departments (EDs) in the United States serve as the nation’s medical and social safety net 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. EDs are required by law to treat any patient regardless of condition, citizenship, or ability to pay. Thus, the ED serves vulnerable patient populations with limited access to medical or social services. Although it is accepted that social factors directly influence health, few patients are asked about these needs during their stay.

The Stanford Help Desk, a collaboration between undergraduate and medical students, faculty, staff and local community partners, presents a model for integrating social needs into ED care. This student-run program trains volunteers to screen for social and legal needs including: health access, hunger, housing, and public benefits. Volunteers navigate patients through available resources, refer to community organizations and follow-up until patients’ needs are met.

**Objectives**

- To identify and address social needs among ED patients by systematically integrating social needs screening into ED care
- To develop a network of community partners to strengthen safety-net healthcare
- To provide an opportunity for students to learn about social determinants of health through service

**Framework**

**Volunteer Experience**

- Deep Dive Training
- Shadowing and Reverse Shadowing
- Independent Screening
- Recruitment
- EMED 125 Class
- Mentorship to New Volunteers
- Graduate to Leadership Role

**Outcomes**

- 1,993 Screened
- 861 with Identified Needs
- **Most Common Needs**
  1. Dental
  2. Employment
  3. Medical debt
- *August 2015-March 2017

**Lessons Learned**

- Establish best practices by continually evaluating and improving program
- Investigate program impact on patient health status, satisfaction, and quality of life
- Adapt and implement program in other EDs

**Future Directions**

- Student Volunteer Growth
  SHARED student volunteers have gone on to medical schools, working in local community health centers, and teaching health policy.

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