

Unwrapping Layers of Advocacy: Patient-provider, Community-clinic, Drafting Legislation and Policy, and Lobbying

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Background

The purpose of the UST policy and advocacy interest group was to create activities to engage fellow UST students on the four different levels of advocacy. These included: patient-provider, clinic-community, legislative drafting, and lobbying. We focused on educating participants on what the four levels are, and how they can, as future healthcare providers and current students, get involved at an early stage in the process. In order to accomplish this goal, we arranged interest group meetings comprised of seminar-style presentations by professionals in the field and a journal club session to touch on current literature in the realm of advocacy and policy. The topic of patient-provider advocacy was touched on via our journal review session with the article "Defining Patient Advocacy in the Post-Quality Chasm Era. Community-clinic advocacy was covered by a presentation by a pediatric endocrinologist. Legislative drafting and lobbying were covered by Bonnie Roswig, JD, director of the Disability Rights Project for Children's Advocacy. Through these sessions, we were able to learn practical skills on how advocacy works and how to take action.

Objectives

- Define the four levels of advocacy: patient-provider, community-clinic, legislation drafting, and lobbying.
- Utilize effective and reliable resources to engage UST fellows on relevant topics through the use of seminar and journal clubs.
- Provide a tool-kit for healthcare student to be effective advocates for their patient and community as a whole.
- Transcend the focus of advocacy to better the health of various groups, and in particular communities of color.



Methods

1. Conferences with experts
 - o Jill Zorn, Senior Policy Officer at Universal Health Care Foundation
 - o Bonnie Roswig, JD, Center for Children's Advocacy
 - o Dr. Laura Nally, Legislative Lead for CT #Insulin4All
 - o Ayesha Clarke MPH, MSW, Deputy Director of Health Equity Solutions
2. Reading and discussing scholarly article
 - o M.B. Gilkey and J.A.L. Earp, *Defining Patient Advocacy in the Post Quality-Chasm Era.* (2009). NC Med Journal, Vol 70, 2

Patient Provider

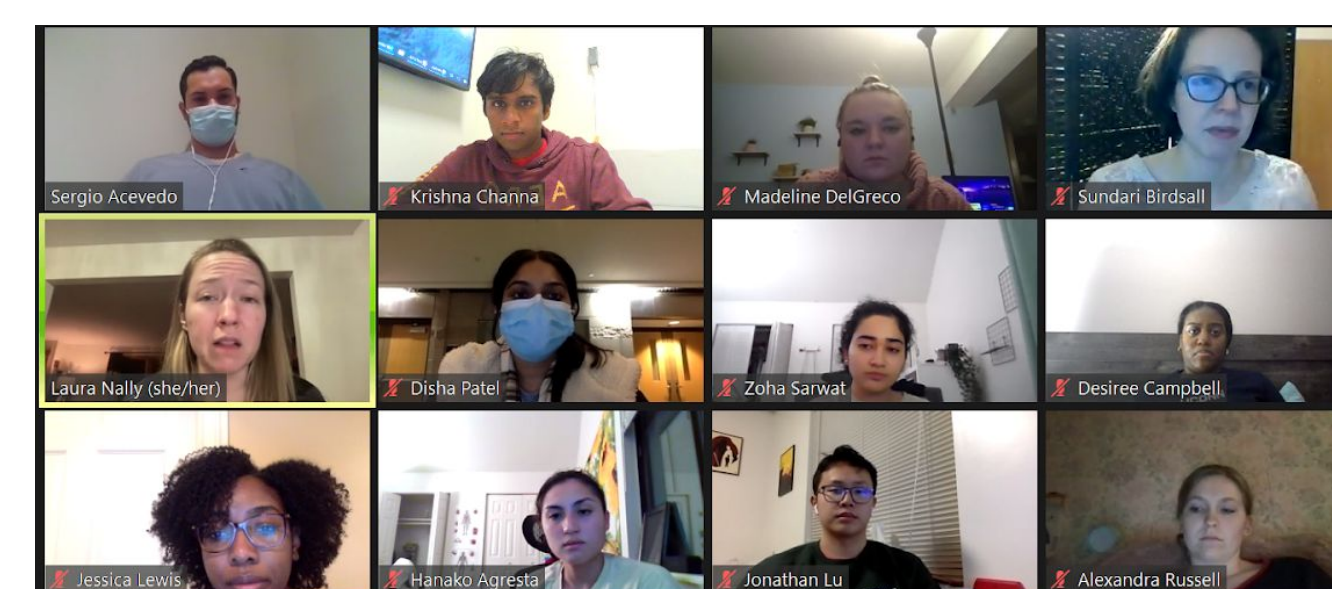
Journal Club: Defining Patient Advocacy in the Post-Quality Chasm Era by Melissa Gilkey. We attempted to define advocacy and learned that the definition is not black and white, but rather shades of grey. Advocacy is difficult to define because it means different things to different people. It needs to be adjusted based on the needs of the people being advocated for. After our journal session we were able to conclude that the four overarching themes that healthcare providers should focus on include empowering patients, taking a multipronged approach, creating a culture of patient-centeredness, and an overarching focus on improving the quality of healthcare through a multifaceted approach.



WebEx journal meeting lead by one of the committee co-leads.

Community-Clinic

Seminar: Dr. Laura Nally gave us an insight look into how to advocate at a community level by providing us examples of how she, as a pediatric endocrinologist, makes an effort to educate the community on the importance of insulin price transparency. The topic of discussion was ideal as it allowed us to see the complexity of the healthcare system in the United States, more specifically drug pricing, and how to help patients manage such a complex system in order to ensure proper access to necessary medications.



WebEx with Dr. Laura Nally, MD, Pediatric Endocrinologist

Drafting Legislation and Lobbying

Seminar: During our discussion with attorney Bonnie Roswig, JD, we gained a deeper appreciation of the role healthcare providers play in the process of developing, modifying, and lobbying for specific policy changes within healthcare sphere. The influence of healthcare providers extends beyond policy development and implementation, they also help influence policy modifications and challenging current laws. In many circumstances, lawyers turn to healthcare providers for consult on numerous levels regarding their clients needs and in seeking professional advice from healthcare workers in order to ensure laws are fairly implemented.

Healthcare advocates also assist patients when they required documentation pertaining to social security disability insurance and healthcare insurance claims. In essence, they play the role of patient advocate, consultant to lawyers, and active participants in the policy development.



WebEx with attorney Bonnie Roswig, JD

Conclusion and Future Direction

There are many ways and arenas that different health professionals can use policy and advocacy to promote health equity. Often, these levels of advocacy interact and enhance each other; the experiences a health professional has on the patient-provider level can fuel their work at the lobbying level.

Some ways that have been identified are using advocacy to connect patients with resources in order to reduce barriers to health care, writing testimonies, uplifting the voices of patients, and having conversations with legislators and other stakeholders.

The ideal trajectory for the UST Advocacy and Policy interest group is for students and future health professionals to have the tools to take action. In addition to applying what we have learned to advocate for change at the four identified levels of advocacy, we have equipped students with the tools to continue to explore advocacy, engage in education, and have conversations about health advocacy and policy.

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Connecting Students to Careers in Health,
Health Professionals to Communities,
and Communities to Better Health

