

# **Art and Medicine Elective: Developing a New Curriculum**

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The American Association of Medical Colleges recognizes that the role of arts and humanities are “essential to the human experience” and their benefits in medical education are numerous.<sup>[1]</sup> The arts and humanities are often used as a teaching modality in a variety of contexts, “from using visual art to teach observation skills to using literature to promote perspective taking.”<sup>[2]</sup> Although this approach has been used at the University of Colorado School of Medicine in individual lessons throughout the four-year curriculum (i.e. in Health and Society sessions first year, in individual trail lectures during the third and fourth year, and sparingly in other required and elective coursework), we have identified a need for improved arts and humanities opportunities for medical students. Currently, there is no dedicated elective for students desiring to engage more consistently with the arts and humanities.

To address this need, we developed a four-week curriculum for medical students who are selecting electives for their final year of medical education. The goal of this elective is to allow students to build on earlier themes of arts engagement in the curriculum to further develop their empathy, perspective taking, and understanding of issues of health equity. Health equity and building student understanding of social justice and ethics are integral parts of the CUSOM's educational mission, and this curriculum is an important option for students to continue to engage in this work.<sup>[3]</sup> Using assessment tools derived from Miller's Pyramid and the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model <sup>[4-6]</sup>, students will move from “knowing” to “showing how” they can model behavior that furthers their goals of working towards healthy equity, improving empathy, and demonstrating personal growth and resilience. The class will be offered for the first time in 2025, and feedback from students who take the elective will help us better refine and update the curriculum moving forward, with the long-term goal of adding the elective as a permanent addition to the CUSOM curriculum.

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