

From the Desk of James Carter, MD, Director-Service Learning

SERVICE-LEARNING CURRICULUM

The new *Trek* Curriculum includes a **Service-Learning Curriculum**. The service-learning curriculum of the University of Colorado School of Medicine (CU SOM) reflects an imperative to equip medical students with knowledge and attitudes to point their professional compass toward health equity. The Service-Learning Curriculum, crafted with invaluable community input, starts as soon as medical students arrive on campus, and is tangibly woven into their foundational curriculum. Programming focuses on personal accountability, historical context, and community perspective, creating an environment for budding physicians to develop a systems-thinking approach to optimizing individual, community, and global health. Culturally responsive skills development will address core competencies of communication, collaboration, leadership, and situational awareness. We will identify and implement cross-cultural clinical tools. Narrative reflection will assist students in mastering core values of humility, ethics, empathy, advocacy, and respect, such that their future professional lives will embody the CU SOM *Trek* curriculum pillars of *Leadership*, *Curiosity*, and *Commitment*.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explore how community organizations address social determinants of health via health promotion to positively impact patient and community well-being
- Collaboratively design, implement, and evaluate a **service-learning project** that supports the missions, and embodies the shared values, goals, and objectives, of the community organization and CU SOM. The service-learning continuum can be one of three levels:
 - Community action: interactions between the student and the community flow in both directions and provides the highest degree of service
 - Community exploration: interactions between the student and the community can flow in either direction, and can include policy, civic engagement, or community-based participatory research
 - Community service: observational learning involving a high degree of service to the community
- Develop skills of self-reflection of cultural assumptions, beliefs, values, and practices, and their implications in healthcare
- Demonstrate culturally and linguistically sensitive engagement with community partners and members.
- Address personal, community, and institutional attitudes and assumptions
- Develop fund of knowledge as it relates to implicit bias, structural racism, and inequity

- Evaluate the impact of social context on healthcare delivery and outcomes

CURRICULAR CONTENT

Foundational training:

- Service-learning exploration and engagement:
 - In the *Plains (pre-clerkship phase of Trek curriculum)*, students will be matched with community-based organizations whose missions are dedicated to key *terrains*: socioeconomic position, food insecurity, safety/shelter, mental health, access/navigation, culture/language, advocacy, social justice, and environmental accountability
 - The bi-directional community-learner relationship will continue throughout *Plains* and *Foothills (clerkship phase of Trek curriculum)*

Service-Learning Projects: minimum of 60-hour commitment over approximately 18-months; collaboratively designed to be of mutual benefit:

- assist organizations with their core mission
- support communities in forging a path toward improvement of healthcare outcomes
- inform medical students about the importance of community engagement and collaboration

For more information about the service-learning curriculum, please contact Dr. James Carter at james.carter@cuanschultz.edu