

Community for Children: At the Border and Beyond



Community for Children encompasses the international health and community pediatrics curriculum for the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio's Department of Pediatrics. It includes international electives that prepare future physicians to provide compassionate, effective leadership within community collaborations.

Please visit our web site at <http://www.communityforchildren.org>.

Application is open to 4th year medical students and 2nd and 3rd year residents. There are no tuition fees.

During this 4-week elective, participants study with international public health experts, physicians, community leaders, promotoras (community health workers), clergy, medical anthropologists, migrant refugee health experts, and families on both sides of the border. Partners include UTHSCSA/RAHC and Department of Pediatrics, UTHSC Houston School of Public Health–Brownsville, Brownsville Community Health Center, Harlingen Pediatrics Associates, Hospital Infantil de Tamaulipas and Centro de Salud/Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico, as well as clinics and community agencies in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) and Mexico.

4-WEEK ELECTIVE CURRICULUM

1. **Rights of the Child**
 - Workshops based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - Meetings with attorneys and judges working in children's rights
 - Interviews with child detainees and officials at U.S. federal detention centers
2. **Social Determinants of Disease and Health**
 - Lectures on social determinants from an international public health perspective
 - Meetings with migrant clinicians and promotoras
3. **Clinical Care in Resource-poor Regions**
 - Resource material and didactics on the challenges of providing ICU services where there is no ICU and a review of infectious and chronic diseases associated with poverty.
 - Direct patient care with faculty pediatricians
 - Meetings with healers not schooled in allopathic Western medicine to discuss alternative health beliefs and practices
4. **Impact of Poverty, Immigration and Violence**
 - Home visits with faculty and lay health educators
 - Examination of roots of poverty through interaction with faculty, families, community leaders, organizations and literature review
 - Reflective essays on observations and experiences
5. **Preparing for Advocacy**
 - Community-based advocacy project
 - Meetings with community activists and advocates
6. **Cultural Competency**
 - Review of current literature
 - Daily opportunities to encounter people whose language, values, affect, economics, religion, norms and politics are personally foreign to participants.
 - Individualized Spanish classes
7. **Fostering a Culture of Compassion**
 - Guided reflection time to explore how medical training supports or undermines compassion for self and for others
 - Reflection on the meaning, causes and repercussions of poverty, and our own emotional responses to the poor among us
 - Reflection on the meaning of "place" in patients' lives and our own
8. **Professional Development**
 - Correspondence prior to attendance to encourage reflection on personal values, affinities, and the "heart" in medicine
 - Private time for reflection on personal meaning, call to action, or sense of direction
 - Individualized professional development counseling
 - Post-elective and mentoring.

Facilities

Classes are held at the RAHC and UTHSC Houston School of Public Health, Brownsville.

Experiential learning is through:

- Field-based activities in LRGV colonias and community organizations
- Brownsville Community Health Center and clinics in LRGV; Home visits
- Hospital Infantil de Tamaulipas and Centro de Salud/Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico, as conditions for safety permit

Other Benefits

- Housing near the academic campus
- Travel Stipends
- Easy access to South Padre Island National Seashore and the mountains and Cloud Forest of Northern Mexico
- Study-related and recreational travel in Mexico, as conditions for safety permit

Block Rotation Schedule:

- July 5-July 30, 2010
- October 25-November 19, 2010
- February 7-March 4, 2011
- April 11-May 6, 2011

Apply ► Please email:

Stanley I. Fisch, MD

Director, Community for Children;
Professor and Director of RAHC
Pediatric Programs

Fisch@uthscsa.edu