Health Justice Project

Course Descriptions

Health Justice Project (755) and Advanced Health Justice Project (757)
The Health Justice Project is a live-client law school clinic that provides law students with an intensive, challenging education in the fundamentals of legal practice, systemic advocacy, interdisciplinary collaboration, creative problem solving and professional values. Through direct representation of clients and participation in an interdisciplinary medical-legal partnership, students address the social, legal and systemic barriers that prevent long-term health and stability for low-income individuals and families in Chicago. Case subject matter may include housing, public benefits, disability and other areas of law. Enrollment in the Clinic requires a significant time commitment and flexibility in the student’s schedule. Students are required to attend hearings and court appearances, participate in an interdisciplinary partnership and tend to other client matters throughout the semester. Students who have successfully completed the Health Justice Project clinic may enroll in the Advanced Health Justice course, in which they will continue to represent clients and complete projects responsive to the needs identified during their clinical experience.

Interdisciplinary Health Advocacy (756)
This course is taken in conjunction with the Health Justice Project course and provides students with an opportunity to join an interdisciplinary team to address health problems of low-income patients. Students partner with medical residents, doctors and social work students to explore communication and ethical issues among disciplines and actively participate in precepting and grand rounds with medical and social work partners.

Introduction to Health Justice (754)
Students enrolled in Introduction to Health Justice serve as client advocates. Students conduct intake and, through direct interaction with clients, practice issue spotting, interview skills and creative problem-solving. Clients may present with a variety of matters related to health, such as housing code violations, medical debt, disability, special education, public benefits denials and other critical needs. Students also gain an understanding of interdisciplinary collaboration in the practice of law and an overview of legal systems that respond to poverty and health disparities.

Health Justice Policy (761)
Students enrolled in the Health Justice Policy course serve as legislative student lawyers. Students engage in multiple activities that may include the representation of a national organization and the development of policy approaches to support access to health for low-income individuals. Students practice legislative lawyering skills, which may include stakeholder analysis, legal research and drafting, creative problem solving, interdisciplinary collaboration, among others. Students also work on an interdisciplinary team that includes social work and medical students.

Access to Health (745)
First year elective course explores the legal, political, environmental, financial and medical issues surrounding access to health in the United States and internationally, with particular emphasis on people who are experiencing poverty and the uninsured. The course is complemented with an optional spring break field study to an impoverished region in the United States or abroad.