BMC: THE GROW CLINIC AND CHILDREN’S HEALTHWATCH

Clare Malone, Program and Research Assistant Co-Op, July 6th – December 19th 2015
Sociology and Cultural Anthropology major
TIME WELL SPENT

• Three days a week at Grow Clinic
  • Two clinic days - helped families, shared resources
  • One administrative day

• Two days a week with Children’s HealthWatch
  • Conducted interviews with caregivers of young children in Pedi ER
  • Worked with Boston site team

• Matched COOL description really well in terms of required duties and time spent.
  • Time distinctions became more fluid and adaptable
  • Definitely felt like an integral part of team
WHAT I HOPED TO LEARN BEFORE STARTING CO-OP

- Experience interdisciplinary clinic
  - Shadow and help various healthcare professions
  - Gain some insight into future career path
- Office skills
- Reality of social science research, public health, and policy work
- How to work in professional and clinical settings
WHAT I WISH I KNEW BEFORE STARTING CO-OP

• Don’t be nervous to jump in and maybe make some mistakes in the first few months of co-op. Projects that seem daunting or complex might be simpler than expected but are still essential.

• Ask for more work and offer help – but there’s a difference between offering general help and expressing an interest in a project.

• There is a lot of background, nuts and bolts tasks that go into clinical work and research – pick an organization you care about.

• Spanish or Haitian Creole
WORKING AND LEARNING STYLE

• This position worked with interdisciplinary teams and variety of professions/fields
• I had personal responsibility for projects
• Learned to ensure clear communication and outlined goals from supervisors
  • Importance of communication, often multiple forms and repetition
• Worked for two organizations housed in same office; this required
  • Time management
  • Working under multiple supervisors
  • Lots of independent work, co-op does tasks for many on different teams
MEANINGFUL AND EXCITING EVENTS/NEW TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Witnesses to Hunger
- Began with Center for Hunger Free Communities in Philadelphia
- Organization began in Boston in partnership with Children’s HealthWatch
- “Real Expert Witnesses”
- Trauma-Informed Care, DTA, cliff effects in child care and benefits

Grow Holiday Party
- All patients and families invited to 2 hour party – games, music, crafts, food, and gifts
- Presents for all patients and all their siblings
- Winter Wonderland theme

CHW Interviews and Patient Interactions

CHW at State House
- Coalition of health care and policy organizations testified at Mass State House
- Children’s HealthWatch presented, as well as testimony from Grow clinicians
PERSONAL IMPACT

• Learned better Time management
• Learned to be more upfront and proactive about interests
• Might want to pursue career as nurse practitioner or get an MPH – or a combination of two
• Would like to work with similar patient population; research inequalities in health, policy
• Learned that policy requires first hand experience in order to be effective
  • Witness to Hunger
  • Clinicians involved in advocacy
ORGANIZATION AND MANIFESTATION OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

- Economic opportunity, social programs, macro-policy decisions, health care needs, housing, food insecurity and poverty are all incredibly – often dangerously – interrelated.
- Discussions and language among providers, advocates important in shaping narrative.
- Client need extends far beyond abilities of donor-funded clinic and well-meaning clinicians.
- Current system in place to stem effects of inequality is broken and causes increased difficulties.
- The inequality can be disheartening and overwhelming; clinical, personal level helps to revitalize and personalize experiences.
• This is one of the “office dogs” – helped us smile every day