

School: Morehouse School of Medicine
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Collaborating organizations: Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness; DeKalb County Board of Health; Georgia Division of Public Health; numerous community organizations, community agencies, and community health centers in metro Atlanta and rural Georgia and Alabama.

Project description:

The Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) is a historically African-American institution established to recruit and train minority and other students as physicians, biomedical scientists, and public health professionals committed to the primary healthcare needs of the underserved. It recognizes the relationship between medicine and public health and integrates these principles into the education of its students. The goal of the MSM Regional Medicine-Public Health Education Center (RMPHEC) pilot was to coordinate the training of medical students to ground them in population health and basic public health principles and practices. RMPHEC enabled MSM to enlarge and enhance some of its existing curriculum to implement integrative activities.

The initial objectives of the MSM RMPHEC project were:

- (1) To create a model partnership between a medical school and local public health for the purpose of demonstrating service-learning in public health.
- (2) To demonstrate the integration of public health practices and principles into the medical curriculum.
- (3) To facilitate the convening of a workgroup of the medical school curriculum committee, the Dean of Academic Affairs, the clinical clerkship coordinators and the Department of Community Health and Preventive Medicine for the purpose of developing strategies to incorporate population based public health into all levels of medical education.
- (4) To develop a guide for public health/medical school partnerships based on local experience.
- (5) To facilitate interaction and sharing of input in the southeast region of best practices in educating future physicians in public health principles and practices.
- (6) To provide a basic integrated public health educational experience to 100% of the first year medical students by the end of the 2003/2004 academic year.
- (7) To provide a population-based focus on health problems of specific communities of interest consistent with the mission of the Morehouse School of Medicine to 100% of the 2nd and 3rd year medical students by the end of the 2003/2004 academic year.
- (8) To provide a basic level of integrated public health education to 100% of 4th year students in a clinical clerkship in the academic year 2003/2004.

The existing Community Health course placed all first year students in small groups in several metro Atlanta communities, where the students conduct community health needs assessments and implement health promotion projects. Students also participate in a mock legislative hearing held by a committee of real legislators in a hearing room at the State Capitol. Representatives of each student group offer testimony on health problems in their community, make recommendations on public policy approaches to remedying those problems, and

respond to questions from the committee. As part of the RMPHEC initiative, the students visited local health departments to learn about their services and capabilities. Public health department staff then assisted the student groups in conducting their health promotion projects.

The RMPHEC initiative participated in the longitudinal Fundamentals of Medicine course to integrate didactic public health material and case studies with the 2nd and 3rd year students' study of ethical, epidemiologic, and behavioral issues.

All 4th year students at MSM take a four-week Rural Primary Care Clerkship in a medical practice or community health center in rural Georgia and Alabama. As part of the RMPHEC initiative, each student visited the nearest public health office to learn about services available there and how these services could support and enhance the clinical services offered at the facility or office where the student was clerking.

An important longitudinal initiative developed during RMPHEC is the Honors Program in Community Service. In this program, students who demonstrated outstanding performance in the first-year Community Health course can pursue a population health project through the remaining three years of medical school and graduate with honors.

Publications: [we have published about the community health course, but not since RMPHEC]

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