

Current Research Projects and Opportunities

	Location of Project	Focus Area	Project Available
1.	Camden, NJ	Chronic Disease Management, Health Disparities, Urban Vulnerable population	Participate in Camden City-wide Diabetes Collaborative in conjunction with Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers as funded by the Merck Foundation. This Collaborative seeks to address the overutilization of Emergency Rooms in Camden by building primary care infrastructure, educating patients in diabetes self-management, and creating medical homes for the more than 6000 diabetics in Camden City, NJ.
2.	Camden, NJ Willingboro, NJ	Health Literacy, Health Education, Health Disparities	Help launch the Lourdes Health System Health Literacy Initiative funded by the Aetna Foundation. Conduct a health literacy assessment of patients using a proven, tested tool at Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center and Lourdes Medical Center Burlington County to build accurate knowledge of overall patient literacy levels. Assist in building and maintaining of a patient education material database, and conduct initial evaluation of the readability of this written material. Assist in planning health care provider education on patient health literacy and plain language communication as well as patient health literacy workshops to promote increased health literacy in targeted patient groups.
3.	Camden, NJ	Health Disparities, Epidemiology and Infectious Disease	Help formulate a plan for Hepatitis B Screening, Education and Vaccination in the Vietnamese and other Asian communities in Southern New Jersey. Through collaboration with the National Hepatitis B Foundation, a Patient Educator from Bristol Myers Squibb, and the Boat People SOS, a Vietnamese advocacy group, the student will organize screening events and education programs to the Asian communities. This initiative aims to improve knowledge and awareness of hepatitis B and liver cancer among high risk groups to ultimately eliminate the health disparities associated with the disease.
4.	Camden, NJ	Cultural Competency, Barriers to Care, Organ Transplantation, Chronic Disease Management,	Conduct surveys in the South Jersey Regional Dialysis Center to evaluate patient attitudes towards and other barriers to organ transplantation, with particular emphasis on socioeconomic, religious, cultural and education influences against organ transplantation. These surveys will be administered orally to patients with end-stage renal disease during dialysis. The project aims to identify barriers to transplantation in dialysis patients and areas for greater patient education and outreach. The student will have the opportunity for direct interaction with patients and to assess the Osborn Clinic's protocol for informing patients' about the available options for organ transplantation.
5.	Camden, NJ	Holistic Medicine (Alternative and Complementary Medicine)	Conduct a study to demonstrate the efficacy of the Prepare for Surgery Program, a free two-hour program taught by a holistic nurse to educate surgery patients on mind-body relaxation techniques to help patients prepare for and recover from surgery better. This initiative seeks to establish the efficacy of holistic techniques in improving surgical outcomes and overall patient well-being. The student will also have the opportunity to design a survey that measures patient anxiety levels pre- and post-operation and overall satisfaction with the quality of care.
6.	Willingboro, NJ	Obstetrics, Health Disparities, Access to Care,	Follow-up with a study on the availability of obstetric specialists for the under- and uninsured gestational population at the Lourdes Medical Center Burlington County Maternity Health Clinic. With demographic data obtained from previous work, the student will have the opportunity to analyze potential barriers (e.g. transportation, cost, insurance, citizenship status) to obtaining specialty care as well as possible solutions to these barriers. Additionally, the student will follow-up with patients in the patient database to determine the percentage of patients unable to receive care from a specialist even with referrals.
7.	Camden, NJ	Health Economics, Chronic Disease Management, Access to Care	Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the impact of Community Health Practice (CHP), a non-profit volunteer healthcare clinic of Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center housed in the Bergen Lanning Health Center in Camden, New Jersey. Community Health Practice provides free primary and specialty care to the uninsured, keeping these patients out of the Emergency Department for unnecessary visits at a tremendous savings to the hospital. The challenge will be to determine how much money has been saved in reducing unnecessary care, by doing comparative analysis for care received.
8.	Camden, NJ	Mental Health and Suicide, Cancer	Some diagnoses put patients at greater risk for suicide than others, like cancer, although this risk is often not discussed. There are two parts to this project: 1. To perform a retrospective analysis chart review on patients with higher-risk for suicide based on their diagnosis to determine the relative referral rates for psychological services and suicide attempts/suicides in this population to evaluate hospital staff's response to patients at increased risk for suicide. 2. After compiling the records of patients with at-risk diagnosis, student will compile data on frequency of various symptoms of suicidal ideation or risk to determine if there are certain patterns of behavior or symptoms associated with different diseases. Through both steps, greater understanding will be gained regarding patients at-risk for suicide. Student will be able to make recommendations to hospital staff for creating or revising existing hospital protocol regarding referrals of patients with certain diagnoses to psychological services based on these risk factors, as well as staff and patient education on risk factors for suicide.
9.	Camden, NJ	Telemedicine, Chronic Disease Management	Design an initiative to implement a web-based diabetes monitoring system for a specific group of diabetic patients in the urban environment of Camden, NJ. The student will assist in conducting pre and post surveys of the patients and health care provider staff regarding the impact of the MyCareTeam Program, an online software program that allows diabetic patients to upload glucose readings via internet or mobile phones. The project seeks to determine if telemedicine can help improve diabetes management among the urban poor, with the goal of improving the overall health of the patient and reducing unnecessary health costs and Emergency Department visits.
10.	West Philadelphia, PA	Health Disparities, Access to Care, Cultural Competency	Conduct a community health needs assessment of vulnerable communities in West Philadelphia. Based at the Mercy Philadelphia Hospital, the student will engage with the significant ethnic groups in the community including West African, Haitian and Asian communities and work with local churches, community organizations, and local leaders to determine the greatest health needs of the communities served by the Mercy Philadelphia Hospital. By collecting primary health data in the form of focused surveys, this work will ultimately be used to implement policy decisions and hospital-based programs that will ultimately help Mercy Philadelphia Hospital understand and serve its communities better.
11.	Newark, NJ	Cancer prevention, Health Disparities, Access to Care	Design an initiative to increase participation for the In the Pink Program, which seeks to increase the proportion of men and women screened for breast, cervical, colorectal, and prostate cancer. The program provides free screening and follow-up services for uninsured or uninsured men and women. This initiative will be conducted for the Connie Dwyer Breast Center – an affiliate of St. Michael's Medical Center in Newark, NJ. A particular focus for this initiative may be to improve awareness among the African American and Latino population as these particular groups have been identified as particularly vulnerable.