



Professional Enrichment Course

University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Office of Medical Education

PEC Registrar – Denise Downs d downs@pitt.edu 412-648-8749

Disability History and Foundations of Care

Enrollment Period:	Spring 2026
Course Dates:	Mon, May 18 5p-7p Mon, June 1 5p-7p Mon, June 8 5p-7p Mon, June 15 5p-7p Tues, June 22 5p-7p
Student Max:	20
Class Year:	Medical and health sciences students
Course Director:	Dr. Max Hurwitz Assistant Professor, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine UPMC Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Email: hurwitzmb2@upmc.edu
Course Administrator:	
Location:	Mercy Pavilion and Kaufmann Medical Building
Registration:	Via Slate – Registration to be announced via email
Course Description:	<p>A growing number of Americans are living with disabilities and often have complex needs requiring high-quality healthcare. Unfortunately, people with disabilities experience healthcare disparities including inequitable access to primary and specialty care, access to prescriptions, quality healthcare, and overall have higher rates of unmet healthcare needs. A lack of disability focused medical education leads to poor clinical competency as well as negative bias toward patients with disabilities.</p> <p>The JEDI elective course will include a total of 5 sessions, providing early exposure to the unique challenges and care needs of people with disabilities. This educational experience will not be focused on specific diseases and their treatments, but on the disability experience and how clinicians can serve people with disabilities in an affirming, anti-ableist way.</p> <p>This will be an immersive educational experience with a multimodal approach, including self-assessments, readings, educational videos,</p>

	small group discussions, and engagement with community members with disabilities.
Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand health policy as it relates to people with disabilities and apply this knowledge to current and historical events. 2. Identify barriers faced by people with disabilities in the community including structural, institutional, legal, medical, social, and employment. 3. Define models of disability and identify the implications of each. 4. Gain an understanding of personal identity as it relates to disability status. 5. Understand the importance of inclusion of people with disabilities in the community, workplace, and in medical education. 6. Identify social injustice in current and historical events and develop strategies to prevent such occurrences. 7. Understand the importance of advocacy and develop advocacy skills pertinent to the disability community. 8. Understand the difference between equity and equality and the implications for people with disabilities. 9. Define health and healthcare disparities and identify examples as they apply to people with disabilities.
Pre-Requisites:	None
Requirements:	Attendance to all course sessions
Texts:	None

COURSE OUTLINE

Session One: Mon, May 18 5p-7p

History of Disability/Disability Health Policy: We will set the stage by discussing historical perspectives and contexts on disability. Students will gain understanding of the implications of current laws, such as the ADA, Section 504, and IDEA, for people with disabilities and practicing physicians.

Session Two: Mon, June 1 5p-7p

Disability Culture and Identity: We will define different societal models of disability and learn about personal identity as it relates to disability and intersectional identities. We will discuss the importance of disability culture and its influence on modern culture, using examples from arts, music, media, and adaptive sports.

Session Three: Mon, June 8 5p-7p

Misconceptions and Discrimination: People with disabilities face many barriers in the community and in health care. We will discuss common misconceptions related to disability, ableism, medical ethics, and social injustices faced by people with disabilities.

Session Four: Mon, June 15 5p-7p

Healthcare Disparities: People with disabilities experience significant health disparities in both outcomes and access to care, and many patients have traumatic interactions with the health care system. We will discuss health and healthcare disparities, medical trauma, and trauma informed care as they relate to patients with disabilities.

Session Five: Tues, June 22 5p-7p

Advocacy Workshop: We will discuss alliance building with patients with disabilities and the significance of both clinician-led advocacy and patient self-advocacy. Students will develop ideas for advocacy initiatives that can be employed in the community, school, clinic or hospital system.