

# Teaching social accountability through community outreach

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## A clinical innovation in family medicine postgraduate training to better care for underserved populations



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**Background:** A Patient Medical Home (PMH) aims to meet the needs of the local population, including addressing challenges such as poverty, job loss, gender inequality and homelessness. Yet, many people face barriers accessing quality, ongoing care.



**Objectives:** A community outreach clinic was established in September 2017 to: 1) increase access to care for local community members in need, 2)

provide opportunities for family medicine trainees and medical students to gain competencies in caring for underserved populations, and 3) provide an opportunity for



the university teaching hospital to engage in social accountability through community partnerships and service to the community.

**Methods:** We recruited patients from the community, matching them with a supervised family medicine trainee, and provided a patient medical home, with patient navigators (i.e. 2nd year medical students) who helped orient patients to the system of care.

**Results:** In the first year of the program, almost 50 patients were provided a patient medical home, to assist in dealing with multiple health and social challenges from undiagnosed diabetes and housing instability to family violence and past experiences of trauma before immigrating to Canada. Loss to follow-up was less than 15%, and many patients signed up their spouses and children to receive care.

**Conclusion:** While community outreach is a logistically complex undertaking, it provides important opportunities for engaging in social accountability, learning more about community needs, and strengthening the competencies of future primary health care providers in caring for underserved populations.

