

# Advocacy Projects in Interprofessional Education: Update on the Jefferson Health Mentors Program

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## Background

Patient advocacy, essential to optimal team-based care, is included in the accreditation standards for many professions. Advocacy is an ideal vehicle for interprofessional education. Implemented since 2007, the Jefferson Health Mentors Program (HMP) is a required longitudinal program for first- and second-year students from:

- Couple and Family Therapy
- Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling
- Medical Laboratory Science
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Physician Assistant Studies

Student teams complete 3 modules over 18 months in partnership with a Health Mentor, a community volunteer with one or more chronic conditions.



## Design and Methods

2017 – HMP revision

Social determinants of health and the Social-Ecological Model included.

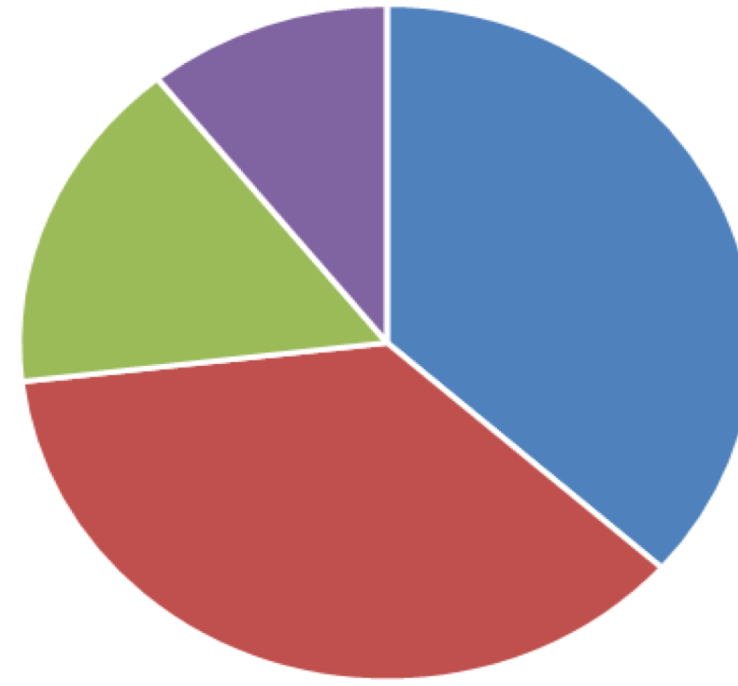
Advocacy module created:

- Teams met with Health Mentor
- Identified topic of concern
- Researched topic
- Created advocacy plan
- Presented findings

Students surveyed about their experience with the advocacy project.

Student evaluation data and project topics were analyzed for themes.

## Advocacy Module: Emerging Themes



- **Advocacy component**
- **Interprofessional communication/teamwork**
- **Person-centered care**
- **Relationship with HM**

## Results

Module evaluations had a 36% response rate (n =245). The majority of students (83%) agreed or strongly agreed that the advocacy project contributed to achievement of the HMP's program goals.

**Evaluation Question:** What is **one** thing you liked or learned in this module?

**Responses:**

- 34% Advocacy component
- 34% Interprofessional communication/teamwork
- 14% Person-centered care
- 10% Relationship with my Health Mentor

**Advocacy Project themes:**

- Mobility access
- Cleanliness and safety of the outside environment
- Access to housing and nutritious food
- Health system navigation
- Access to transportation
- Government programs
- Medication access and adherence issues
- Access to local/national resources

## Conclusion

Interprofessional student teams can partner with their Health Mentors/community volunteers to:

- Increase awareness of the influence of social determinants of health on wellbeing
- Engage in projects recognizing the contributions of each team member
- Recognize the value of the relationship with the individual Health Mentor
- Demonstrate practices of an effective team
- Develop their advocacy skills
- Deepen their understanding of local and national policy and its effects on healthcare

## Lessons Learned

Including patient advocacy in IPE can reinforce aspects of person and population-centered care and enhance key teamwork skills.

