

Example of a Brief Description of a Research Project

TITLE: The Expanding Role of Emergency Medicine in Safeguarding Human Rights

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RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 1986, Congress enacted the Emergency Medical Treatment & Labor Act (EMTALA) to ensure public access to emergency services regardless of ability to pay. EMTALA cemented the position of Emergency Medicine (EM) at the interface between the US healthcare system and society. Note EM is the only sector of healthcare legally mandated to provide care thus providing an important safety net for society [1]. The emergency department (ED) is a natural destination for individuals who feel impoverished, oppressed, and those without medical recourse. Indeed, this has been described in populations as diverse as survivors of torture, undocumented immigrants and the economically disadvantaged [2-4]. The ED is also a source of medical care for persons lacking financial resources, access to preventative care, language skills, and those without the knowledge needed to navigate the complexities of the US healthcare system. Note, based on 2009 data, 21.4% of ED visits were by uninsured patients [5]. Accordingly, EM attenuates numerous real and perceived barriers which may impede patients from obtaining medical care. In doing so, horizontal inequity (i.e., access to advanced care beyond primary care) is reduced as many emergency departments have the ability to get patients to subspecialty clinics. Our focus will be to analyze the advancing role of EM in the practice of basic human rights principles by expanding access to healthcare. We argue health and thus healthcare is a fundamental human right and healthcare inequity in the US and globally fundamentally impacts human rights. We will assess literature data and existing patient databases to search for inequities (terms such as human rights, civil rights, healthcare inequities, e.g.) cross-correlated with emergency medicine to help support our argument. Through this analysis we will describe the multifaceted means by which EM addresses issues regarding the safeguarding human rights. This project is supported in part by a Clinical and Translational Science Institute grant (NIH 1UL1RR029890).

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