



Letter from the Editor:

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Dear readers,

Welcome to the fourth volume of the *Free Clinic Research Collective*. Our publication is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal that serves as a platform for sharing the critical thought and humanistic values of medical students and free clinic volunteers, aiming to present these ideas in an approachable way. Although medicine can be a rewarding career in practice and study, many of us find that our arduous training leaves us with little time to contemplate the process of becoming a physician. For some, participation in student-run free clinics allows us to more readily experience caring for the vulnerable and underserved in our communities and to see the practical applications of the evidence-based medicine we learn in the classroom. As the well-known Oslerism goes, "To study the phenomenon of disease without books is to sail an uncharted sea, while to study books without patients is not to go to sea at all." Writing about these experiences, in turn, allows us to turn our inner voices into a more tangible reality and to more deeply understand and learn from our own experiences and the experiences of others.

In this issue, we have authors reflecting on personal experiences, offering insight and realizations from their journeys. We have a reflection about the importance of confronting our own biases as free clinic volunteers. The author, a medical student from the University of California, San Diego, Harpreet Gill, cautions that we too may be "harboring a savior complex without even realizing it." Another reflection details the necessity for genuine human connection at free clinics, both for patients and volunteers, and another stresses the importance of addressing lifestyle needs beyond simply writing up a prescription. We have an essay in which an author shares her fears about largely invisible addiction and substance abuse disorders and the "responsibility to overcome this silence." Another author poses the question: "What is your *purpose* in medical school that gets you through the day?" and offers participation in free clinics as a natural endeavor to stay connected to that purpose. Another reflection considers poignant lessons learned as an HIV counselor at the Berkeley Free Clinic that inspired the author to want to start a free clinic in the future.

We have also included eight brief communications in this issue of the *Free Clinic Research Collective*. One communication describes the integration of clinical psychology services and physical therapy to improve adherence to prescribed rehabilitation programs at a free clinic, another discusses a policy development project meant to provide a curricular link between free clinic leadership and a healthcare administration class, and another details how collaboration with a student workforce can help sustain a community health center in financial difficulty. Authors from Clínica Martín-Baró, a student-run clinic that "aims to bridge the disconnect of Western medicine to Latinx values," share psychologist Dr. Martín-Baró's framework of liberation psychology. We have communications from the University of Texas, Southwestern's The Monday Clinic, the University of Massachusetts, and Drexel University's Health Outreach Program, sharing their respective takeaways from implemented quality improvement strategies for areas like the transition of volunteers, case

management to connect patients to longitudinal primary care and social services, program development, and needs assessment. We also have correspondence detailing a pilot community health education initiative in San Francisco. Finally, we have original research from medical students at the University of Rochester, describing findings from the implementation of REDCap as an electronic medical record for their Street Medicine program.

I would like to thank all of the authors who contributed to this issue of the *Free Clinic Research Collective*, as well as the entire team. This issue is a culmination of our team's commitment and dedication to review and edit the numerous, high quality submissions that we received. In particular, thank you to the peer reviewers below who contributed to this issue:

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Free clinics play a role essential to the growth of future healthcare leaders, and I hope this issue of the *Free Clinic Research Collective* inspires you to take time to reflect on your own experiences. If any of the featured articles in this issue rouse comments or discussion, please do get in touch; we welcome a correspondence piece as a response. Our author guidelines can be found on our website and provide our standard instructions for submitting manuscripts for consideration for publication in one of our upcoming issues.

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