

LEGAL COUNCIL

FOR HEALTH JUSTICE

Pre-Med Legal Care Externship for Fall 2016

The Pre-Med Legal Care Externship with Chicago Medical-Legal Partnership for Children is an unmatched opportunity for aspiring physicians to gain insight into the intersection of law and medicine.

Chicago Medical-Legal Partnership for Children is a program of Legal Council for Health Justice which works with some of the region's leading children's hospitals and clinics to provide free legal assistance to vulnerable families and children so that they are better able to access health care, public assistance, education, and a myriad of other benefits. Through regular resident training at hospital sites, we train future generations of health care providers to recognize and respond to social and legal issues that undermine patient health. We also engage in high-impact systems change to reduce health disparities and advance the welfare of our clients. For example, after receiving numerous referrals regarding drastic cuts or elimination of in-home nursing care for medically-fragile children, we filed a class action lawsuit against the State of Illinois. A preliminary injunction so far ensures that these children continue to receive in-home nursing services until the case is settled.

Pre-Med Legal Care externs are involved in all three of these aspects--training, client service, and public policy. Externs will have the opportunity to interact with clients through helping with intake, learning how to screen for health-harming legal issues, interacting with residents at both large group and one-on-one resident trainings, and assisting broader policy efforts--including litigation, legislation, and administrative advocacy work. Externs will learn about many social programs and tools that will inform their practice and help them better treat future patients as health care professionals.

Externs are expected to work on-site while they apply and/or prepare to enter medical school (approximately Aug 2016-May 2017). Other timeframes may be possible.

Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree
- Strong writing skills (writing sample required)
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office (including Microsoft Outlook)
- Knowledge of Google Drive
- Website construction knowledge a plus
- Fluency in Spanish a plus
- Interest in policy and a desire to work with underserved populations in the Chicagoland community
- Interest in issues impacting early childhood health and education
- Minimum 20 hours per week commitment

To Apply:

Please submit a cover letter, resume, writing sample, and anticipated timeframe of availability to amy@legalcouncil.org with the subject line "Pre-Med Legal Care Externship" by May 1, 2016.

“As an aspiring health care provider taking a gap year, I knew I wanted to do something different that would give me a window into the field I hope to work in. Working with Chicago Medical-Legal Partnership for Children has given me unprecedented access to see the issues my future patients might face outside of the hospital. Everyday, I see clients who, despite getting some of the best medical care in the country at renowned children’s hospitals like Comer and Lurie, are unable to fully recover due to social and legal issues plaguing them. Perhaps they have asthma, but live in a home infested with mold and roaches; or their school does not have a seizure action plan in place; or they are unable to keep a home-health nurse and risk more expensive institutionalization. I have gained knowledge of tools that physicians can use to advocate for their patients’ rights and hopefully decrease costly hospitalizations. I was also able to talk about this work during medical school interviews and I am confident that this unique experience gave me an edge in the application process.” -- Nina Clark, CCOM Midwestern University, Class of 2020

“Working with Chicago Medical-Legal Partnership for Children was probably one of the best experiences that I could have had, both in terms of my overall development as a future physician and during the medical school application process. My time there taught me a great deal about health disparities and social determinants of health on both an individual and systemic level. On an individual level, I was able to see how the right legal and social services referrals made at the right time can make a huge difference in the management of a child’s health condition as well as the overall well-being of the child’s family. On the systemic level, I was able to gain a greater understanding of the many players and moving pieces involved with addressing negative influences on health via policy and legislation. On any level, what struck me the most is how much more powerful both healthcare providers and lawyers can be in their respective field with the aid of each other. So much of health is inextricably intertwined with larger contextual and systemic issues – my experiences at CMLPC have given me a formative insight into these issues and I am confident that the lessons that I learned there will continue to prove invaluable in my future career as a physician and patient advocate.

Amanda Kim, J.D., University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine, Class of 2019