



2022 Quarter 1 Newsletter

About Us

Our Vision & Mission

Join Our Board

Student Coalition

Our Mission

Inspiring and equipping communities worldwide to provide Street Medicine services to persons experiencing rough-sleeping homelessness.

A Message From our Outgoing Board Chair

Welcome to 2022, Street Medicine Friends!

It is such an honor to be in community with you as you continue to serve our rough-sleeping brothers and sisters even as the COVID pandemic cycles on. Thank you for your ongoing strength, resilience and forbearance.

As we leave 2021 behind, the SMI board is pleased to report to you that our shared work remains energized. Two new street medicine teams are a bit further along as a result of help from our first two Seed Grant awards. Over 600 of you from around the world gathered for our second virtual International Street Medicine Symposium in October, and advocacy efforts led by our California members are moving forward toward potential reimbursement for the services you all provide. The number of street medicine teams sponsored and staffed by students continues to grow, and educators involved in their mentorship have begun conferring to ensure a standardized street medicine curriculum. We hope and believe that through our community's efforts more persons sleeping rough are receiving more and better care. Thank you to each and every one of you for your ongoing work.

Looking forward to 2022, you are likely to be seeing new faces at SMI. Steve Perry became Board Chair effective January 1, 2022; I hope you will all give him the same generous support and welcome I have enjoyed. Effective immediately, SMI is also recruiting for a part-time Executive Director and for several new board members - particularly with skills in finance, marketing or fund-raising. Please contact us at info@streetmedicine.org if you know someone who might be interested in either of these opportunities.

2022 is certainly starting as another challenging year - for both those we serve and for those of you who do the hard work of street medicine. We wish you ongoing strength, peace and well-being as you carry on through these next months.

In solidarity, your outgoing chair,

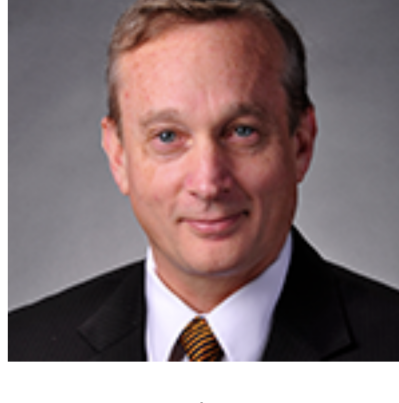
Irene McFadden



Steve Perry, SMI Board Chair - January 1, 2022

[Click Here to Apply to the SMI Board](#)

Founders Blog



Jim Withers, MD

We've been witnessing the spread of an evil global virus for over 2 years now. At this point, COVID has transcended its own virology and taken on an existential significance we cannot deny. Like other pandemic scourges such as yersinia pestis and tuberculosis, it creeps through society to particularly afflict those who are poor and excluded from the protections of privilege. For those of us in the United States in early 2020, it came as a shock that people of color were dying at dramatically higher rates. We should not have been surprised. Evil forces work together like a wolf pack to consume those who are already wounded. Injustice, poverty, apathy, disease, and violence always conspire to crush the oppressed. We know this from our work in street medicine.

I've been reflecting on the character of evil even more these past 2 years. It can be hidden, but when we see it, we recognize its ways. It begins in the hearts of men with selfishness, greed, and pride. These lead to inequalities that spiral into tribalism, conflict, and suffering. The spirit of evil spreads through the airways just like the air we breathe. We absorb its toxic influence. We harm each other and pass it onto the young, who lose hope for the future. Evil generates fear. Fear first divides us, then it allows us to be herded like sheep to the slaughter. We allow evil men to lead us further into destruction. We forget who we are.

[Continue Reading](#)

Humanization Through Government Recognition of Street Medicine

The Street Medicine Institute is leading an effort in the United States to recognize the street as a legitimate place to deliver healthcare, thereby recognizing the right of people experiencing homelessness (PEH) to life and to their reliance on street medicine services to survive. In a [letter](#) to the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), SMI and the University of Southern California (USC) Division of Street Medicine outline the difficulties people experiencing homelessness have with accessing brick-and-mortar care, how street medicine helps, and how the lack of a relevant Place of Service (POS) code results in street medicine services not being reimbursable. This prevents our programs from securing the resources to meet the need at best, or threatens their existence, at worst. For programs to survive, street medicine providers are forced to divert their attention away from clinical care to write grants and fundraise, while our neighbors die unaided (and, in many cases, insured) on the streets.

Why is a POS code for the street so important? In order to get reimbursement from CMS, providers must bill for medical services that are delivered in a particular [place](#) of service. There is no clear POS code correlating to under a bridge or behind a dumpster, so medical care can't be delivered there (and be paid for). If the places don't exist, do the people who live there exist? According to the US government reimbursement structure, no. Street medicine has a long history of striving to practice reality-based medicine. The practical application of evidence-based medicine to the reality of the street drives our everyday practice. When a system fails to recognize a person's lived reality, it alienates them from that reality and the decision-making it requires. People are transformed into objects to be possessed with only the subjective reality of the possessor as the true or accepted reality. The medical insurance industry runs the risk of being a vehicle of possession when only the reality of the possession is considered while ignoring a person's actual lived experience. The culture of possession is based on objectifying people to a unit that can be better managed or measured. For example, people can be dehumanized into a single solitary unit of measurement like a hemoglobin A1C control, or reason for hospital admission, which separates the person from their lived environment in the name of measuring "quality". Or people can be transformed into cases to be managed, or placed in "managed care," with services tightly regulated based on population norms, ignoring the peoples' reality that differ from the norm. Sometimes, rules created to bring order, like the POS code, can serve to exclude people who can't access care in those places. The resulting choice is either to dehumanize people into cogs who must fit into existing system machinery, or to honor their humanity by creating a system that lovingly recognizes their reality.

The goal of the Street Medicine Institute, and the many who share the mission, is to engage in a creative dialogue rooted in love and humility with the people who's lived reality must be honored (because only they can reveal it to us), and the people who have the ability to recreate systems like CMS to acknowledge and protect the humanity of people it serves. With a mutual trust, we look forward to working with CMS and other organizations to protect everyone's right to life. For PEH, this includes recognizing their lived reality in the street as a place where they can receive needed healthcare.

Submitted by Brett Feldman, MSPAS, PA-C

ISMS XVII

Despite obstacles presented by the ongoing pandemic, we heard you tell us that gathering - even if done virtually - continues to be a vital need for our members. So, on October 21 through 23, 2021, SMI held its second virtual International Street Medicine Symposium and was able to offer free registration for our members. Being able to see names and faces, listen to the speakers, and interact with one another was uplifting for everyone who attended even though it was accomplished remotely. Despite our collective zoom fatigue, we had a total of 622 registrants, the highest count ever! 263 cities, 22 countries, and 6 continents were represented at this symposium event! We are so thankful to all of you for participating in our shared mission, and we hope to be able to see everyone in person in 2022 for the 18th annual International Street Medicine Symposium!

SMI Job Opportunities Board

At the 17th annual International Street Medicine Symposium, we were excited to announce a Job Opportunity board as a new membership benefit. Members may post open positions on our website; postings will remain in place for 90 days and will be viewed by anyone who visits our website. To post a position, the following must be provided:

- Job Title
- Job Location
- Organization
- Job Description
- Starting Salary / Hourly Rate, and
- Link for interested applicants to Apply.

Below you will find buttons to visit the jobs board and submit a job posting. If you have any questions, please email info@streetmedicine.org.

[Click Here to View Job Opportunities](#)

[Click Here to Submit a Job Posting](#)

