

July 27, 2018

One of the joys of my life is that I get to not just work with the people on the streets of Pittsburgh, but I also get to travel to other communities where street medicine is either active or in development. It's a front row seat to the global street medicine movement. Earlier this month I had the pleasure of a two-day visit to the new Spartan Street Medicine program in Lansing, Michigan founded by an amazing group of students at the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine. Brianne Feldpausch is a second year medical student who spearheaded the program and was my guide for those two days.

Brianne is a classic student leader who actually worked with me at Operation Safety Net in Pittsburgh for a year before entering medical school. She was so passionate about street medicine I can remember telling her she should take over for me some day. So I wasn't surprised when she told me she was starting her own street medicine program at her medical school. Now it was time for me to come see how things were going.

Student initiated programs are a remarkable accomplishment. Think about both studying all your medical school subjects and creating an entirely new medical program from scratch! Fortunately, Brianne and her student team were able to recruit two wonderful physicians, Dr. Scott and Dr. Atkin. After a great lunch with the student leaders, I met with these two faculty champions and was quite impressed with the depth of their commitment. It does me a lot of good to really get to talk about social justice, inclusion and innovative learning environments with my own peers. After establishing a core group of student leaders, finding faculty champions is one of the most important things students must accomplish for a good program.

That evening I spoke to a large group of students, community partners and faculty. Despite the late hour I could feel the energy in the room and knew they had captured the imagination of their entire community. Afterwards we talked in the lobby and much to my delight there were student leaders from other parts of Michigan. Rebecca Pilkerton represented the street medicine group in Ann Arbor, and Sam Jackson (who had just done a month with us in Pittsburgh) came down from Saginaw where he is working on his own street medicine initiative. If he succeeds, that will be four student-initiated street medicine programs in Michigan! The first, Street Medicine Detroit, was started by Jonathan Wong at Wayne State. Jon is now a medical resident in Toronto and works on streets there. You can understand why I am so proud of our Michigan students!

On the second day I met with the original Spartan Street Medicine students and the upcoming student leaders to discuss their plans. The new group was just as amazing as the founders. I was also very impressed that the Interim Dean of the medical school, Dr. Amalfitano, joined us and expressed his commitment to the street medicine vision. Not only did we talk about the large vision, but also many of those critical details that make all the difference. I was really moved when some of the students told the dean they had chosen to come to MSU specifically because of the Spartan Street Medicine program!

Finally, we drove back to Detroit where I met with leaders of the Detroit Schweitzer Fellowship program and then some of the Street Medicine Detroit student leaders. I love that the student

leaders throughout Michigan are supporting each other and hopefully their example will spread to the growing global student movement. Thanks Brianne and everyone who made my brief visit so meaningful.