

Development of a Free Clinic Research Consortium

Meredith Hengy, BS, Peter Dimitrion, MS, Sara Saymuah, MS, Narmeen Rehman, MS, Steven Daveluy, MD
Wayne State University School of Medicine

IDEA

- The Detroit Free Clinic Research Consortium (FCRC) plans to create a patient data repository of five Detroit student-run free clinics, with a goal of identifying the specific health needs of the community

RATIONALE

- In the US, approximately 29 million Americans were uninsured as of 2017.¹
- Free clinics provide care to many of these patients and close health gaps.²
- Financial support for free clinics has been declining, reported in 2016 by the National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics to be as much as 20%.³
- Free clinics remain under-researched.⁴
- Declining funding highlights the acute need for research and targeted care approaches.
- FCRC aims to compile patient data from five Detroit based free clinics and conduct community-driven research to identify the unique patient health concerns

METHODS

- FCRC will focus on five student-run free clinics in Detroit, Michigan.
- The institutional review board (IRB) was contacted regarding the feasibility of creating a free clinic patient database. It was determined that a data repository can be created through the IRB, and all subsequent research studies will require individual IRB support.
- Local free clinic and physician mentor support has been obtained.
- Recruitment is underway for creation of an executive board consisting of 3 research co-chairs, 5 research coordinators, 3 database coordinators, and 4 faculty supervisors.
- Once the organization has been established, we plan to conduct an initial large-scale research study seeking to identify the top 10 health concerns of the Detroit free clinic population.
- We will use this information to inform local free clinics and help to guide patient care.
- Bi-weekly organization meetings will be planned to discuss current research projects, generate new research ideas, and discuss results.



FUTURE GOALS

- Further research will be conducted to answer more specific questions, particularly related to specialty specific research and investigating the variations in organization structure and function.

IMPACT

- As funding for free clinics is declining and they remain under-researched, the FCRC plans:
- (1) To conduct unified research projects to expand population health research in Detroit's free clinic population in order to better understand the unique health concerns, as well as structural and community influences
- (2) To provide a mechanism to monitor the changing needs of urban free-clinic patients
- (3) To identify methods to and leverage new public health discoveries to improve quality of care funding for free clinics
- (4) To demonstrate the benefit to regional research consortiums

REFERENCES

