



Health Justice Internship



The Health Justice Internship provides first-generation BIPOC pre-health and equity-oriented students with an opportunity to (1) engage in a medical student and community-led curriculum around structural racism, vulnerability, and social justice in medicine, (2) receive personal and professional mentorship, and (3) complete a tangible project geared towards improving health in communities they call home. We had the pleasure of interviewing Matthew Hing and Dailyn Rodriguez Reyes on behalf of the Health Justice Internship.



INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Mission of Health Justice Internship

We recognize that both **challenging structural racism and realizing health equity takes more than just doctors**; it requires a coalition of community members, health workers, and healers. Our goal with the Health Justice Internship is to create a space where learners can develop their critical consciousness about the structural and social determinants of health and expand on the traditional scope of pre-health programs. The HJI is built around caring for communities made vulnerable by racial capitalism, heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism, among other forces. As such, the curriculum focuses on specific populations such as immigrants and undocumented individuals and dives into their resilience, histories of resistance, and what they continue to struggle against. The HJI is centered around care, community, and imagination. The focus on *care* stems from caring for own communities, especially empowering youth in their journeys and creating spaces for them to grow. The *community* dimension stems from trying to break down barriers between communities and academia by appreciating the wisdom already present in communities and engaging with community members, groups, and leaders that are organizing around these issues right now - we center these efforts through our Community Speaker Series. Lastly, *imagination* comes with having interns work on projects that reimagine what health and medicine could look like in the future, who has the power to decide that, and, overall, crafting new visions of what it means to care for our communities and build health justice.

Reshaping What Medicine Can Be

Health and illness happen in a matrix of power. **One pressing issue in medicine is that the current systems of care aren't set up to deliver the care that communities need.** Right now, clinics and hospitals are *separated* from the community - they aren't seen as community spaces and there is limited community input or collaboration. We need to work on dissolving this divide. So much of health happens outside the clinic, so we need to develop ways to bring care outside and beyond the clinic. **A second pressing issue is the ways in which we as health professional students learn about health and illness.** There are so many organizations, coalitions, and community leaders that are working to make their communities healthier and yet we aren't seriously taught these models and examples as interventions that could be a part of health. For their final project, one of our intern groups made a powerful documentary film where they interviewed people in their communities about what they think doctors should learn in medical school to be able to take care of them in the ways they need - they titled the film "*Changing the Curriculum: A Demand for Health Justice.*" What we try to explore throughout the HJI is how can we unlearn some of the ways we look at the world, practice humility, and come to hold multiple ways of thinking about health and healing that show us more equitable paths forward.

What message would you broadcast to the world?

Love of community and building community! Community love goes beyond borders and life is constantly transformed through community.

Another world is not only possible, but she's on her way!

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www.healthjusticeinternship.org