Division of Social Accountability Highlights Report

JUNE 2019

The College of Medicine (CoM) supports and facilitates equity-focused and community engaged clinical care, education, advocacy, and research to benefit local, regional, and global communities. Social accountability is grounded in identifying, responding to, overcoming, and anticipating health challenges facing our communities, especially underserved and marginalized groups, through mutually beneficial and collaborative partnerships. Social accountability is an accreditation standard for Canadian medical schools and has been embraced by national bodies responsible for the training of physicians. The college's Division of Social Accountability (DSA) helps facilitate social accountability and authentic community engagement across the college.

In August 2018, Dr. Preston Smith travelled to Basel Switzerland to accept the 2018 ASPIRE-to-Excellence Award in Social Accountability, awarded to the USask College of Medicine by the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE). The award is reserved for medical faculties that demonstrate (i) deliberate and sustained efforts to integrate social accountability into all functions and, (ii) international leadership in social accountability. We are one of only four medical schools in Canada to receive this international recognition. The college continues to demonstrate leadership and excellence in social accountability through its admissions programs, community engagement, education and training, and research activities.

In August 2018 the college admitted the first cohort of six students through the new Diversity and Social Accountability Admissions Program (DSAAP). The program is in response to research suggesting that, in general, medical students come from families that are wealthier than the population as a whole. As a medical school, we feel our medical community should reflect the community we serve. Nearly 20% of the Saskatchewan resident applicants applied to the program, suggesting the DSAAP is meeting a previously unmet need to support students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

This past year the DSA launched the Community Reciprocity Fund, to help strengthen community-driven, action-oriented strategies to address priority health needs. We also worked with community-based organizations through participation in the Saskatoon Refugee Health Collaborative, YXE Connects, and the Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership. Among these initiatives is the poverty simulation workshop, delivered for the second time in 2019 to first-year medical students in collaboration with the United Way of Saskatoon.

The division continues to support the college in providing culturally resonant undergraduate education that will enable students and practitioners to work effectively in the diverse communities of Saskatchewan. The DSA produces annually, for the UGME Curriculum Committee and course chairs, a communique of common social issues and resulting health implications in Saskatchewan. The 2019 version of this report outlined Indigenous inequities, poverty, early childhood development, climate change and mental health as key areas of focus to help ensure our curriculum aligns with local, provincial and national priorities. In the summer of 2019, the division also began piloting a revised version of the Social Accountability Lens with the Curriculum Quality Review Subcommittee. The lens serves as a guide for review of social accountability within undergraduate medical curriculum.

In 2019 the division, in partnership with the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, also launched the Social Accountability Lab for Learning and Teaching (SALLT). The lab supports

undergraduate students, graduate students and residents in creative and innovative training and learning about social accountability, community engagement and advocacy. In 2018-19 the DSA and the Aboriginal Admissions Program collaborated with the Indigenous Mentorship Network to offer an Indigenous Health learning series to faculty, staff and students featuring topics in ahkameyimok: resilience, cultural safety, decolonizing science and technology, global indigenous health, and transforming historical narratives to improve community health. The division also hosted a health equity learning series in 2018, covering topics such as dialogue and action for change, justice and health, and truth and reconciliation and the legacy of residential schools.

The division also administratively supports the Health Training in French / Formation Santé en Français program, which provides learning opportunities and practicum placements for health students and professionals looking to reinforce their skills to help serve the francophone community in Saskatchewan. This project works in partnership with the Réseau Santé en Français de la Saskatchewan and the AFMC national FrancoDoc project.

The Division of Social Accountability continues to manage the Making the Links - Certificate in Global (MTL-CGH) Health program, which annually accepts up to 15 students for advanced training in socially accountable health care provision. Training in this program relies on strong community partnerships and involves students working in the urban core of Saskatoon or Regina, as well as a 6-week placement in rural Indigenous communities in Saskatchewan, and an advanced 6-week practicum in Indigenous health or health of underserved international populations. Through the program, the division and the college has established longstanding partnerships with Buffalo River Dene Nation, Île-à-la-Crosse, Pinehouse, Kawacatoose First Nation, Research and Training Center for Community Development in Vietnam, James Cook University in Australia, Universidade Lúrio in Mozambique, and Mbarara University of Science and Technology and Kigezi Healthcare Foundation in Uganda. Graduates of this program are more likely to stay in Saskatchewan, practice in primary care, and work in rural areas. The DSA hosted two medical students from Universidade Lúrio in Mozambique in September 2018, and two students from James Cook University in Australia in November, as part of a reciprocal exchange within the MTL-CGH program.

The DSA supports global health research and advocacy by providing travel awards to faculty, staff, students, residents and community members that require funds to participate in health initiatives, learning, research or knowledge translation locally or internationally. So far in 2018-2019, 22 global health travel awards have been granted through the program (more travel awards will be granted this fall, 2019). In 2018 the DSA also assisted in hosting an annual student-led global health conference: *Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers: Accessible Healthcare for Vulnerable Populations*, which saw over 150 attendees from across the health sciences. The division also works to contribute to social accountability research and has been collaborating with the University of British Columbia and Université de Sherbrooke to conduct key informant interviews and focus groups to understand how Canadian medical schools are putting social accountability into action. This research will help schools build on the strengths of others to further advance social accountability nationally and internationally.