

**Submission Id:** 5469

**Title**

*Community Partner Perspectives on a Medical-Student-Led Patient Navigator Program for Persons Experiencing Homelessness*

**Priority 1 (Research Category)**

Community based participatory research

**Presenters**

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**Abstract**

Context: With increasing rates of homelessness, there is an expanding need for the direct assistance that this population requires. Patient Navigator Programs (PNP) aim to address these needs by connecting persons experiencing homelessness (PEH) with well-equipped navigators. A novel medical-student-run PNP has been implemented with the Union Gospel Mission (UGM) shelters and UT Southwestern Medical School in hopes of addressing this growing need while also educating the new generation of medical professionals.

Objective: To evaluate the community partner's perspective on the current operations of a medical-student-run PNP.

Study Design and Analysis: Six semi-structured interviews with UGM staff members were conducted using open-ended questions regarding the implementation and future directions of this PNP. Thematic analysis and reconciliation were performed to isolate common themes.

Setting or Dataset: UGM women's and men's shelters. Data was collected based on the thematic analysis of the interviews performed.

Population Studied: Six UGM staff members including 4 chaplains and 2 members of shelter leadership were interviewed from both shelters.

Intervention/Instrument: The interviews consisted of eight open-ended questions exploring the staff member's experiences during involvement with the PNP, advantages of having medical students as navigators, and significant, unexpected obstacles faced during program implementation.

Outcome Measures: Interviewee responses to each theme were totaled by two independent contributors. Reconciliation was used to make conclusions on interviewee responses.

Results: All interviewees had a positive perception of the current operations of the program. Specifically, they commented on themes such as, but not limited to, the success reaching client goals and the benefits of having well-informed, resourceful medical students as navigators. Interviewees reported unique challenges that this program faced such as rocky leadership transitions and slow expansion of services, along with recommendations for new PNPs such as the importance of flexibility and understanding the complexities of working with PEH.

Conclusions: This qualitative analysis provides a better understanding of the role of medical-student-run PNPs for PEH and will hopefully help other institutions to develop similar initiatives.