

"Research & Training to Improve Clinical Care"

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Short Name: Improving Mental Health Care in Safety Net Medical Settings

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Abstract:

The burden of mental illness and addictions in the population served by safety net medical facilities is substantial and cannot be accommodated by specialty mental health facilities. Despite the urgent need for effective approaches to organizing, financing, and delivering mental health and addiction services integrated with medical care, few researchers have the necessary skills, training, and background knowledge to conduct relevant, high impact research in this setting. A cadre of investigators is needed that understands the administrative, fiscal, policy, and community stakeholder perspectives needed to translate research findings into clinical practice. This postdoctoral fellowship program aims to increase the number of early career investigators trained in mental health and addictions services research with a safety net medical setting focus. Our interdisciplinary program is embedded in an academic-public sector partnership that has flourished for several decades. Three postdoctoral investigators will be selected each year to participate in a 2-year program of mentored training for a total of 15 fellows over the 5 year period. The interdisciplinary training will involve faculty from the Departments of Psychiatry and Medicine in the School of Medicine, and from the Schools of Social Work, Nursing, and Public Health. Mentored research projects and exposure to clinical, administrative, and policy activities as they unfold in safety net settings form the core experiences of the program. These experiences will be facilitated by individually tailored didactic and mentorship plans designed to impart crucially important knowledge and skills. By addressing the critical shortfall in appropriately trained investigators, this program will translate evidence-based findings to the community of safety net service providers. We believe this approach holds promise for short and long term improvements in the delivery of mental health and addictions care in safety net medical settings.

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