



project **health** boston

"The world is calling; heal the world and in the process heal yourself, find the human in yourself by finding the citizen, the activist, the hero."

– Tony Kushner

advocate application info packet

Spring 2010

i. about project health

Who We Are

Project HEALTH is a non-profit that mobilizes the nation's undergraduates to provide high-impact services to low-income families and, in the process, to transform our healthcare system into one that is more effective and more just. To learn more about our work, our vision, and more, visit www.projecthealth.org.

Project HEALTH believes that undergraduates have what it takes to make real change – for individual families and for our country's healthcare system. We are always seeking passionate, committed, social justice-minded students to join our movement.

What It Takes

All Project HEALTH advocates bring great commitment, creativity, tenacity, and humility to their work with families. And, as members of an advocate community on their campus, they continuously reflect on this work and develop their programs to achieve greater impact. Every advocate in Project HEALTH:

Commits to dedicate at least six hours a week for at least two semesters.

The majority of advocates, once they start, stay with PH until they graduate, and many choose to put in more than six hours each week. These basic expectations are designed to allow you to do great work with families and have a fulfilling experience, and you're always welcome to do more if you choose!

Fulfills all program expectations.

This includes engaged participation in all trainings, shifts, reflection sessions, follow-up shifts, and program development projects, as detailed in the next section.

Strives to embody Project HEALTH's values in his/her work.

Our values, defined collaboratively by the advocate, staff, and alumni community, are:

- Stepping up as leaders in a common vision. We believe that we can create transformative change in ourselves, each other, and our communities, and we each take responsibility for persevering in our commitment to realize that change.
- Collective strength and the power of shared work. We recognize that change occurs only by knowing each other as individuals and by uniting multiple perspectives through strong collaboration and true community.
- Constant and courageous learning. We continually strive to understand ourselves, each other, and our communities more fully, and to learn from those around us and those who have come before us.
- Celebrating our victories and each other. We recognize that changing the world is a lifelong project, and we make time to rejoice in the strengths and successes that move us toward our vision.

ii. your role as an advocate

Founded in Boston in 1996 by a team of 10 Harvard undergrads, Project HEALTH's Boston site now works with a select team of 65 students from Harvard and Boston Universities.

Harvard students staff three programs based at Boston Medical Center. These programs assist families in accessing resources to meet the non-medical needs – food, housing, child care, clothing, job training, and more – that impact their children's health. Advocates work with clinical partners to screen families for these needs, then work one-on-one with families to help them navigate the complex social services bureaucracy to identify appropriate services and advocate to ensure that they receive them.

After providing these services at the clinic, advocates continue to follow up with families by phone to check in and troubleshoot any barriers families encounter in obtaining services, until they can ensure that the need has been successfully resolved. Their services are preventative in nature, aiming to help families avert crises and achieve increased stability, income, and education, which have been documented to result in better long-term health outcomes for their children.

■ **Family Help Desk**

Advocates staff a desk in BMC's pediatric outpatient clinic. This is Project HEALTH's first program ever, operating continuously since 1996! Providers refer almost half of the total families seen at this desk, and other families walk up to request services. The Family Help Desk is beloved by its clinic, very busy with referrals, and always bustling, with lots of cute kids running around. Open Mon-Fri, 2:30–5:00 PM.

■ **Women's Resource Center**

Advocates staff a desk in waiting room of BMC's OB/GYN Clinic, which offers a full range of services including prenatal care, minor surgeries, termination of pregnancies, and gynecological care for women in all stages and ages. Women are identified for services through referrals from providers and outreach by advocates in the waiting room. This is an exciting opportunity to work with expecting women preventatively and to be in a clinic that provides innovative care with refugees and addiction in pregnancy issues. Open Mon-Fri, 9:00-11:30 AM and 2:30-5:00 PM.

■ **Project Baby**

Advocates visit new mothers in their recovery rooms in BMC's nursery, as they rest for a few days after giving birth, to screen them for resource needs and connect them with services. Unique to this program is lots of contact with nursing staff, a very intimate setting with each mom, and a great opportunity to connect with women and their families at a really important moment in their lives and those of their children. Open Mon-Sat, 3:00-5:30pm.

Each advocate is assigned one shift a week (always the same day and time, with the same shift partner). In addition, advocates must also be able to participate in:

- Reflection Sessions: Sundays from 6-7 PM (FHD and WRC) and 7-8 PM (Project Baby), with an extended All-PH session from 6-8 PM on the first Sunday of each month. Held on campus, except for All-PH sessions, which alternate between the Harvard and BU campuses.
- Follow-up shifts: 1.5 hours/week, on campus, at regular times determined by advocates. Follow-up includes contact with clients to check in and troubleshoot,

additional research as necessary on behalf of clients, and documentation of case activity.

- Program development: approximately 1 hour per week of a variety of responsibilities that advocates share to keep programs running smoothly – making new flyers, keeping up with email communication with your program team, meeting with your PCs, and other projects.

iii. advocate trainings

New advocates in Project HEALTH must complete *all* scheduled training before beginning work with families. If you cannot make all the trainings listed, please wait to apply another semester.

Training for Spring 2010 includes the following sessions:

- Friday, 2/12 from 3:00 – 7:00 PM at Boston Medical Center
- Saturday, 2/13 from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM at Harvard

If you anticipate that you will not be able to attend a training session, email Monica at msawhney@projecthealth.org *before applying* to let us know about the nature of your conflict. Indicate specifically which sessions of the regular schedule you would not be able to attend.

Prospective advocates should also save the date for the following PH event that take place early in the semester:

New Advocate Dinner

Wednesday, March 3rd – Time TBD for the new advocate group

All new advocates come together for dinner on campus after their first couple weeks on shift, to talk about how it's going, ask all the random questions they've been accumulating (not that you can't ask them at any other time too – you can and should!), and further build the community they created during training. Tasty food provided.

iv. how to apply!

To request an application:

Email Monica Sawhney at msawhney@projecthealth.org from the email address you wish your application link to be sent, with "Harvard Application" in the subject line and your first and last name in the email body. Monica will then send you a link to the online system. Note that this link will be unique to your email address – do NOT forward it to anyone else, or their answers could overwrite yours!

Important application dates:

- **Friday, 2/5 by 12 noon:** Submit your completed application via the online system. Applicants who are selected to advance will be contacted to schedule an interview.
- **Saturday and Sunday, 2/6-2/7:** Interviews conducted on campus by student Program Coordinators.
- **Sunday, 2/7:** All applicants will be notified of acceptance decisions no later than 10 pm.

Contact us with any questions!

For questions about training requirements or the online application system, contact Monica Sawhney at msawhney@projecthealth.org.

For questions about anything else, contact Harvard Campus Coordinators Nicole and Lisa nst@fas.harvard.edu and lrotenst@fas.harvard.edu.

Thanks for your interest in PH. We look forward to working with you!