
WASHINGTON MEDICAL LEGAL PARTNERSHIP HEALTH STUDENT SUMMER INTERNSHIP

Location	Harborview Medical Center [mostly remote]
Department	Pediatrics
Qualifications	Enrolled in (or expected to start, in the fall) a graduate health sciences program: dentistry, health policy, hospital administration, medicine, public health, pharmacy, social work, nursing.
Dates	8-10 weeks total– healthcare & legal student to coordinate times
Weekly Hours	10-20 Stipend \$3200
Health Considerations	Students will work in a clinical environment. Completion of any required vaccination or screening before start of internship is expected.
Project Description	<p>HB1357: Impact on Prior Authorization and Access to Care</p> <p>This practical, policy-focused project seeks collaboration between healthcare providers and advocates from the Northwest Justice Project to better define clinical issues and legal processes impacted by a recent change in State law. In 2023, HB1357, “modernizing the prior authorization process,” was enacted. This is now RCW 48.43.830.</p> <p>Prior authorization is a process used by health plans to manage costs. It requires providers to obtain approval from a health plan before a service or medication is delivered. The process aims to ensure that any care is the lowest cost option and is not unnecessary, duplicative, or of low value. While it helps control costs, prior authorization can lead to administrative complexity and delays in patient care.</p> <p>Washington State law now requires that prior authorization rules must be described in detail and available to providers and facilities in an electronic format upon request. These prior authorization requirements must be based on peer-reviewed clinical review criteria.</p> <p>Working with clinicians and attorneys from the Medical Legal Partnership, summer interns will develop fact sheets and work flows for clinical teams to efficiently access, review, and (if needed) challenge these criteria. In addition, we will use test-cases with common clinical conditions to screen for any barriers to access created by this process, use of outdated clinical criteria, or failure of health plans to meet requirements of the new law.</p>

Activities

- Learn about the principles of medical-legal partnership (MLP) and its role in addressing health-harming civil legal needs.
- Participate in any concurrent training activities related to MLP services.
- Review documents and interview key informants to understand the role of prior authorization in the provision of Medicaid services to patients at Harborview Medical Center or Seattle Children’s Hospital.
- Interview MLP attorneys and clinical stakeholders (physicians, pharmacists, social workers) to document areas in which patients, communities, or healthcare systems suffer harm or inequity because of problematic application of prior authorization.
- Work with legal colleagues (MLP attorney or law student extern) to determine a strategy to test the use and usefulness of new legal avenues to examine and challenge the application of prior authorization to the care of current MLP clients.
- From the health professional perspective, assist legal colleagues in understanding the clinical implications and health system costs of specific barriers to care presented in prior authorization implementation.
- Work with clinical colleagues to determine a workflow through which newly available information about prior authorization could be efficiently accessed and reviewed for patient benefit.
- Develop an issue brief and collateral materials (infographic, presentation) to educate stakeholders on the implications of this new law, its appropriate use in promoting prior authorization efficiency, and ‘red flag’ criteria that identify clinical circumstances immediately amenable to legal supports.

Products

Internal issue brief
Clinically tailored infographic or executive summary

To Apply

No later than April 12, 2024: please send your CV and a cover letter, explaining how this experience will complement your education, to:

Brian D. Johnston, MD MPH
Chief of Pediatrics | Harborview Medical Center
Associate Medical Director | Harborview Medical Center
Professor of Pediatrics | University of Washington Dr. Brian Johnston
bdj@uw.edu