College of Community Health Sciences

The University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences in Tuscaloosa also functions as a regional campus of the University of Alabama School of Medicine (UASOM), providing the clinical years of education to a portion of UASOM medical students. All medical students complete their first and second years at the School of Medicine’s main campus in Birmingham and their third and fourth years at any one of UASOM’s four campuses – Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Huntsville and Montgomery. Upon completion of all four years of medical school, students are awarded the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree from the University of Alabama School of Medicine.

Medical students who choose to complete their clinical years at the Tuscaloosa campus can also apply to be part of an innovative new program, the Tuscaloosa Longitudinal Community Curriculum (TLC²). The program is modeled after well-established, longitudinal integrated clerkships at the University of Minnesota and Harvard Medical School and provides students the opportunity to have long-term learning relationships with experienced, practicing community physicians and mentors, and to provide comprehensive care of patients over time and through different points in their health care journey. TLC² students spend their third year completing the same clinical rotations and core competencies but in an integrated fashion that more accurately reflects how medicine is practiced. This differs from traditional third-year clinical rotations, which consist of separate, specialty-specific, eight-week rotations. Additionally, students in the TLC² program receive elective credit and a certificate in leadership through a unique course that integrates with their daily clinical experiences advanced work in physician leadership, population health and health policy.

Objectives

A primary responsibility of the College of Community Health Sciences is to contribute to the improvement of the health of Alabama, with an emphasis on small towns, rural communities and other underserved populations. The educational programs of the College are designed to increase the physician workforce, the availability and accessibility of health care and to improve its quality.

The College:

• Provides the clinical years of medical education and training (third and fourth years) for a portion of medical students enrolled at UASOM.
• Operates a Family Medicine Residency.
• Works with UASOM to integrate medical education programs with non-medical aspects of health care delivery.
• Provides training sites and internships for students in nursing, social work, pharmacy, clinical dietetics, health education and health care management.
• Provides available expertise in medical and health sciences to undergraduate and graduate education programs at The University of Alabama, and offers courses in medicine and health sciences to enrich University students’ education by relating it to health, health care and the healthcare delivery system.

Family Medicine Residency

The University of Alabama Family Medicine Residency, which is operated by the College of Community Health Sciences, was founded in 1973 and today is among the oldest and largest such residencies in the country. Through the educational programs of the residency, the College fosters the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to create outstanding physicians capable of providing high-quality, continuing, comprehensive and patient-centered care. Through its residency, the College also offers fellowship programs for Family Medicine physicians in Obstetrics, Hospital Medicine, Geriatrics, Sports Medicine, Behavioral Health and Rural Public Psychiatry.

Rural Medical Scholars Program

The Rural Medical Scholars Program, which is also operated by the College of Community Health Sciences, prepares outstanding rural scholars for Family Medicine or primary care practice in Alabama. Scholars selected to participate in the program, which is exclusively for students from rural Alabama, enroll in preparatory courses at The University of Alabama. Upon completion of their studies, they must meet the requirements for admission to medical school. Students matriculate two years at The University of Alabama School of Medicine in Birmingham for the basic medical sciences component of their curricula and then return to Tuscaloosa to the College for the clinical clerkship years, where they are also involved in special medical experiences that include rural preceptorships. For more information about the Rural Medical Scholars Program, contact: Dr. James Leeper, professor and director of Educational Programs, Department of Community and Rural Medicine, College of Community Health Sciences, (205) 348-1355 or jleeper@cchs.ua.edu.

Faculty

Administrative Officers
Richard Streiffer, MD, Dean
Harriet H. Myers, PhD, Assistant Dean for Medical Education
John C. Higginbotham, PhD., Associate Dean for Research
Thomas Weida, MD, Chief Medical Officer
David Nichols, Chief Operating Officer
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Ricky Friend, MD, Family Medicine (interim)
Scott Arnold, MD, Internal Medicine
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Karen Burgess, MD, Pediatrics
Thaddeus Ulzen, MD, Psychiatry & Behavioral Medicine
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Richard Friend, MD
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Susan Guin, MSN, CRNP
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Drake Lavender, MD
James Leeper, PhD
John McDonald, MD
Jerry McNight, MD
John Miller, MD
Harriet Myers, MD
William Owings, MD
Stretch Reed, MD
James Robinson, MD, Endowed Chair
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Robert Sheppard, MD
Catherine Skinner, MD
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Joseph Wallace, MD
John Warren, MD
Lloyd Williamson, MD, DFAPA
John R. Wheat, MD
Nelle Williams
Lea Yerby, PhD

Courses

CHS 101. Emergency Medical Services I. 3 sem. hrs.
CHS 155. Freshman Seminar. 3.00 sem. hrs.
Freshman Seminars provide an opportunity for faculty members in the College of Community Health Sciences to engage with a small group of students (limited to no more than 20 students) in the context of a subject related to medicine or health related topics that is personally and professionally meaningful. The structure of the freshman seminar allows for flexibility in instructional methods.

CHS 200. Health & Wellness Advocacy. 3 sem. hrs.
Education and training in core peer education skills preparing for certification as Peer Educator (CPE). Health and wellness education targeted to college age in alcohol/substance use, tobacco, stress, nutrition/fitness, eating disorders, financial management, sexual health/healthy relationships.

This course will explore multiple aspects of weight management through a holistic health approach. Components of nutrition, stress management, physical activity principles and techniques within an ecological framework will be emphasized.

CHS 330. Intro Clinical Medicine. 3 sem. hrs.
Course is designed in lecture format to acquaint students engaged in premedical studies with the major patterns of illness in the U.S. and with the medical disciplines that treat those diseases. Enrollment limited to junior and senior premed students.

CHS 400. Rural Envir/Occup Health. 3 sem. hrs.
Designed to help the student recognize environmental and occupational health hazards in the rural setting, the effects of exposure to these hazards, and preventive measures that should be taken to avoid them.

CHS 420. Basic Epidemiology. 3 sem. hrs.
A basic course in epidemiology designed for students in health or related fields which points out the population-oriented approach to epidemiology and shows how the methodology can be used to develop knowledge of disease etiology with application to the entire spectrum of health service.

CHS 422. Community Clinical Proc. 3 sem. hrs.
A combination of scheduled sessions and fieldwork. Field work includes visiting with assigned rural advisor, completing a rural community assessment, and assisting with community health screenings and education programs.

CHS 423. Indep Stdy Community Med. 1-6 sem. hr.
An individual learning experience that involves the student in documentation of, evaluation of, and/or strategic planning for solving a community health problem.

CHS 425. Biostatistics. 3 sem. hrs.
Statistical methods and concepts particularly appropriate for biomedical research and health-related subjects.

CHS 427. Health Policy & Planning. 3 sem. hrs.
A problem-based learning seminar that introduces the student to the field of health policy and planning.

Continuation of studies from CHS 422, including introduction to basic physical assessment techniques and continuation of a community project.

CHS 442. Practical Issues Behav Medicin. 3 sem. hrs.
Lectures and readings will examine behaviors that compromise overall health status (eg, tobacco use, noncompliance) and behavioral aspects of specific medical conditions (eg, heart disease, cancer, pain). Topics will include bioethics, racial/ethnic disparities and rural mental health issues. Writing proficiency within this discipline is required for a passing grade in this course.

CHS 490. Clinca Correlations in Biochem. 3 sem. hrs.
The purpose of this course is to study biochemical principles in a clinical context and to observe the process of medical information assembly and reasoning in clinical care.