



Health Care Immersion

The Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. Appalachian Institute
Wheeling Jesuit University

What will I be doing?

Health Care immersions introduce students to the difficulties of health care in rural areas to low-income individuals who have significant chronic health problems based on work-related demands, lifestyle choice, and heredity, but neither the transportation nor insurance needed to access the limited health services available in their communities. By participating with local health care providers and community activists, students are able to grasp the holistic methods necessary for treating impoverished individuals. The opportunity to have personal connections with low-income individuals in need of health care, forces students to come to grasp with their spiritual commitment to those in need through their own career choices.



St. Louis University students teach PATCH 21 pre-K students about the importance of teeth brushing and hand washing.

Service Site Examples

- **Patch 21**— The program currently serves 2,800 students in Roane, Jackson, and Mason Counties with pre-K and after school programs. PATCH focuses on character education, tobacco, drug, and alcohol prevention, civic duty and service learning, watershed and clean water awareness, entrepreneurial job skills, and leadership. Service groups will organize and conduct public health programming for the Patch kids around a pertinent topic.
- **Blood Sugar/Blood Pressure Screening clinics**—in cooperation with various organizations, immersion groups organize and conduct free diabetes testing clinics for rural residents.
- **Rural Clinic and Hospital Shadowing**—students will be able to learn about the uniqueness of rural health care by observing local nurses and doctors at work in small clinics and hospitals.
- **Low-Income Health Care Visits**—to put a face to low-income health care issues, students visit locals who are not only burdened by severe health issues, but also a lack of insurance.
- **Public Health Programming**—regional experts will present interactive presentations and tours on health issues like prescription drug abuse, work-related health, addiction, environmental health impacts, and the general structure of rural health care.

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“He who has health, has hope. And he who has hope, has everything.” ~Proverb

How much?

The trip costs \$300/person (\$325-HS groups) with a minimum of 10 people. This cost includes meals (unless eating off-site), lodging, programming, and resource materials. Deposits must be made approximately 6 months in advance.



Wheeling Jesuit U. student teaches defibrillation at a local public health clinic.

Where will I be staying?

Rock Lake Community Center—This community center, located in a beautiful old rock quarry, is a safe and local place for community and cultural programming serving area youth, adults, and seniors. Community gardens and various programming allow for a richer experience for students. Facilities include outdoor hiking, cots, kitchen, and showers



Rock Lake Quarry—a great place to hike!

Call to Action!

At the end of each immersion experience, the Institute performs a “Call to Action” for the entire group to focus on setting goals for awareness and advocacy. We believe post immersion experiences are incredibly important for students coming on immersions and for the future of the communities they’re serving with. The service and programming experiences we offer seek to *awaken students from the sleep of inhumanity*, as Father Jon Sobrino put it, and provide them with opportunities to build meaningful relationships and develop objective, informed opinions on issues pertaining to Appalachia and their own home communities.



Patch 21 student learns the importance of teeth brushing with a little help from Mr. Mouth!

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