

## **Medical Student Scope of Practice at The University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine Free Clinics: the Maria Shelter and the Washington Park Clinic**

Medical student involvement in community based free clinics contributes to medical education through early exposure to the clinical environment, the practice of basic clinical skills, and reinforcement of professional values. Student involvement may also enhance the amount and quality of patient care delivered to targeted populations such as uninsured patients or patients with otherwise poor access to care. Under Illinois State Law, however, medical care at a free clinic can only be delivered by a licensed physician practicing under clearly outlined guidelines. While students may complete the bulk of administrative work required to run a free clinic and assist with clinical care, their clinical activities must be limited to their scope of training and taken under the supervision of a licensed physician. Importantly, just as in other areas of the healthcare system, all key elements of the patient encounter must be delivered by the supervising attending. Compliance with this expectation ensures appropriate care in an ethical manner to all patients.

In order to ensure appropriate care in the Pritzker's free clinics, the School of Medicine has created an outline describing student scope of practice. The outline (attached) delineates clinical activities our students are prepared to perform at key points in their preclinical years. In the context of the free clinic, students may pursue delineated activities with a supervising physician on site at the clinic. Students should not be assigned or pursue clinical activities outside their scope of practice. Regardless of the student's contributions to a patient's clinical care, the supervising licensed physician must complete all key elements of patient care.

### **Key Points:**

- 1) Students should not be assigned or pursue clinical activities outside their scope of practice as delineated in the attached document**
- 2) Regardless of the student's contributions to a patient's clinical care, the supervising licensed physician must complete all key elements of patient care**
- 3) These expectations are in place to ensure medically, legally and ethically appropriate care to patients at the Pritzker Free Clinics**

**Student-Run Free-Clinic Scope of Practice Draft**  
**Scope of Pritzker Student Practice by Stage of Training<sup>a</sup>**

Practice Stage	Pre-Clinical Year	Quarter	History*	Physical Exam/Procedures*	Scope of Clinic Duties
Stage 1	M1	After Free Clinic Orientation	HPI including seven descriptors	Sphygmomanometry, IM injections, blood glucose testing	Directing patients to rooms; assisting patients in completing intake assessments; taking preliminary HPI; blood pressure; injections and glucose testing; observership
Stage 2	M1	End of Fall Quarter	Complete medical history not including sexual history	Sphygmomanometry, IM injections, blood glucose testing	Directing patients to rooms; assisting patients in completing intake assessments; taking medical history short of sexual history; blood pressure; injections and glucose testing; observership
Stage 3	M1	End of Spring Quarter	Complete medical history including the sexual history	Modified head to toe examination and breast examination	Directing patients to rooms; assisting patients in completing intake assessments; taking complete medical history including sexual history; head to toe examination short of GYNE, neuro and ophthalmologic; injections and glucose testing; observership
Stage 4	M2	End of Fall Quarter	Problem-focused history taking skills; oral presentations (full history presentation & SOAP format)	Remaining elements of exam: neurology, ophthalmologic	Directing patients to rooms; assisting patients in completing intake assessments; taking complete problem focused medical history; complete examination short of gyne exam with SOAP presentation; injections and glucose testing; observership

<sup>a</sup> Unless otherwise stated, scope of practice at given point in the year reflects the inclusion of all Scope of Practice Items in prior practice stage.

\* Indicates novice competence in this area