

Utilizing Street Medicine to Reduce Communicable Disease Prevalence in a Cost-Effective Way

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Abstract : The Spokane Street Medicine (SSM) Program aims to deliver medical care to people experiencing homelessness in Spokane, Washington. Street medicine is designed to function in a non-traditional setting to help deliver healthcare to a largely underserved population. In this analysis, the SSM Program's medical charts from street and shelter encounters in early 2021 were reviewed in order to identify illness and diseases in people experiencing homelessness in Spokane. More than half of the prescriptions written during these encounters were for either an antibacterial, an antibiotic, or an antifungal. Estimates of the cost to the local healthcare system are included. Initiating treatment for communicable diseases in people experiencing homelessness via street medicine efforts greatly reduces economic costs while improving health outcomes.

Keywords : ethical issues in public health, equity issues in public health, health economics, health disparities, healthcare costs, medical public health, public health ethics, street medicine

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