

# Health Professions Education Institute (HPEI)

## *Works in Progress*

**Title:** Serving a Vulnerable Population: Student Outcomes from a Free Foot and Ankle Clinic

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### **WORKS IN PROGRESS**

#### *Background/Needs Assessment:*

A student-run foot and ankle clinic was created in partnership with the WFSOM DEAC Clinic and a community organization, City with Dwellings. The clinic first opened in July 2021 and continues to serve the homeless of Winston-Salem monthly. Patients are examined by graduate health students and a certified podiatrist. Patients receive foot care kits and a well-fitting pair of shoes. This is an invaluable resource for our community's vulnerable population who has limited access to proper foot care and a higher incidence of morbidity related to lower extremity disease.

The clinic is a significant educational outlet for graduate health students. Importantly, students at the clinic are taught to properly perform a foot and ankle exam. Beyond a basic lower extremity vascular exam, foot and ankle physical exams are rarely taught in current curriculum, yet many of these students are pursuing primary care or specialties that will involve the foot and ankle. Additionally, exposure to vulnerable populations, such as the homeless, is not common among traditional medical education. This clinic serves to aid students in gaining a level of comfort in order to advocate for health equality throughout their careers.

#### *Objectives:*

To determine the evolution of student comfort level in 1) working with an underserved population and 2) performing a proper foot and ankle exam

#### *Methods/Description of Program:*

We will assess student comfort levels in performing a proper foot and ankle exam as well as working with a vulnerable population using a pre and post surveying method detailing students' perceived comfort levels on a scale of 0-10.

To evaluate the change in level of comfort, the absolute difference before and after each clinic will be recorded for each student. Results will be stratified to explore whether there is a difference between lower-level and upper-level students using a paired-T test.

*Anticipated Results/Evaluation Plan:*

We expect that after continuous participation in the clinic, students will feel more comfortable with performing a foot and ankle exam as well as caring and advocating for a vulnerable population.

*Next Steps:*

In the future, we hope to incorporate the clinic into the WFSOM health equality program to expand the educational experience derived from this opportunity.