Dear colleague,

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Advancing Equity in Healthcare: Integrating Health Justice into Medical Curriculum

Dear readers, welcome to our latest edition of Insights! Today we’re focusing on a pressing issue that should concern us all: the gap in medical education when it comes to health disparities and social justice.

The topic of integrating health justice into the medical curriculum is often overshadowed but of utter importance. By including such important topics in healthcare education, we would have an opportunity to transform and improve healthcare itself.

In this edition, we sat down with Dr. Robert Rock, a family physician, educator, and social justice organizer.

- Born and raised in Queens, New York, his journey into medicine was inspired by his family’s experience and his personal encounter with health inequalities.
- Robert co-founded a Health Justice Course during medical school to address the gaps in healthcare education, providing a platform for students to explore health equity and community engagement.
- He also serves as the Fellowship Director for the Health Justice Fellowship within the Social Mission Alliance, supporting students passionate about health justice while underscoring the importance of integrating health equity and social determinants of health into the medical curriculum.

The big picture: Medical academies, by their nature, serve as the training grounds for future clinicians. It is here that students are becoming clinicians of tomorrow. Without a comprehensive understanding of health disparities, systemic oppression, and the social determinants of health, they risk perpetuating the very injustices they should be addressing.

Robert’s early experiences of feeling ‘unseen’ in medical school due to the absence of these critical topics in the curriculum underscored the urgency of reform, therefore “Health Justice Course” was born, with the help of a colleague Tahreem Rehman, MD.

Why it matters: The creation of the Health Justice Course and the Health Justice Fellowship, created by Robert and his peers, serve as a powerful example of how including health equity and social justice can empower the next generation of clinicians. These initiatives not only create safe spaces for students with a passion for health justice, but also provide the knowledge, skills, and networks necessary to drive meaningful change in their careers.

Better is not gonna happen if we don’t make it for ourselves.

Dr. Robert Rock

The bottom line: Medical schools must equip students not only with clinical knowledge, but also with the tools to challenge inequalities, engage with communities, and advocate for a more just and equitable system.

Go deeper: Watch the whole interview HERE.

Until Next Time,
People Power Health Team

Feedback
Anonymously tell us what you thought of this newsletter. Your responses will help us create better content for you!

Was this edition useful?