

Learner Engagement

Welcome to the Social Mission Alliance's new Learner Engagement newsletter! Each monthly edition will highlight what's going on at SMA, the work learners are doing at their respective institutions to advance health justice, and ways you can get involved. We will also highlight opportunities targeted toward trainees committed to advancing health justice.

For Us All Campaign

The Social Mission Alliance *For Us All* Campaign is a vehicle to activate our community and the communities they serve to advance structural changes aligned with SMA's vision in health professions training. A part of the For Us All campaign is a media narrative effort that will highlight the material impacts these kinds of advancements have on patients, communities, clinicians, learners, and educators. These stories are a template for what we should be striving for in our healthcare and health professional training institutions.

Our first feature is written by Karina Ascunce González and Avik Chatterjee highlighting the **importance of community-based education and research**. Karina, a Ph.D. candidate in neuroscience at Yale University, shares how conducting qualitative research with Latine populations in Boston shaped her understanding of community health and how to best serve communities.

In her own words:

*"This kind of qualitative, shelter- and residential-treatment-facility-based research and learning experience did provide me with the **skills I needed to engage, empathetically and meaningfully, with people living with illness**. This project also served as a catalyst for my own professional trajectory, making it clear that **I wanted to pursue a career in social justice work through medicine**, working for and with underserved individuals, communities, and populations, as my mentor Avik Chatterjee does on a daily basis and as do thousands of physicians, social workers, nurses, and other healthcare professionals."*



You can read her full blog post, [How Community-Based Education and Research Shaped My Career Goals.](#)

Want to submit a blog like this? Submit ideas through the [form on our For Us All webpage.](#)

Recent Webinars

SMA recently relaunched our **For Us All** campaign for health justice on November 4 [with a webinar](#). We're looking for people to share their advocacy stories with us, in addition to sharing the campaign and supporting our Health Justice Fellows as they work to effect change at their institutions.

We hosted two other webinars this fall focusing on protecting [pathways into health professional careers](#) and [protecting safety-net care](#). Panelists shared strategies ranging from educating the public about health policy, advocating for states to step in where federal funding has contracted, and continuing to share information with students about how to finance their education.



Transitioning to the Learner Engagement Initiative

These webinars are part of our now formalized Learner Engagement Initiative. We have sunset the SMA Student Assembly and replaced it with the Learner Engagement Initiative in order to decrease the burden on students relative to leading program development and to instead broaden the conversation among leaders at all stages of professional training. Additionally, this will allow for greater inclusion of perspectives from community, patients, educators, program leaders, and learners in realizing the change that unites the alliance. We believe this transition will strengthen connections across the Social Mission Alliance necessary to realize the collective vision that brings us all together, while still maintaining a home base for student activism.

What We're Reading

- [Why Building Power Is Key to Protecting Academic Public Health and Advancing](#)

[Health Equity](#) (*American Journal of Public Health*): While targeted toward public health researchers, this journal article has lessons that are applicable across the health professions.

- [Medicine, Politics, and the Importance of Physician Advocacy](#) (*Yale School of Medicine*): This article profiles Arvind Venkat, a physician who advocates for public health as a Pennsylvania state representative.
 - [Public Health Was a Place For Warriors Once. It Needs to Be Again](#): This essay in *The Nation* by Gregg Gonsalves highlights the historical precedents for political activism in public health while calling for a needed recommitment to grass roots organizing addressing the core structures that inform poor health in this country. In the essay he highlights the work of [Defend Public Health](#) as an opportunity to get involved with local organizing right now.
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Opportunities

Submit a Blog Post - If you are part of an initiative that aligns with the 5 pillars of the For Us All campaign and would like to submit an essay to be published on our website or that of one of our campaign coalition partners, please submit ideas through the [form on our For Us All webpage](#).

Future Feature Friday Social Media Spotlight - If essays are not your preferred form of communication, please consider collaborating with SMA in curating one of our Social Media spotlights. The purpose of the spotlight is to amplify the voices, ideas, and work of current health professional trainee activists organizing to advance social justice in health professional education and health equity more broadly. In alignment with the For Us All Campaign, we welcome you in using the SMA platform to highlight initiatives that speak to any of the 5 pillars of the For Us All Campaign. If interested, please [submit an inquiry through our form](#).

CISMPH Fellowship - The [Center for Integrative Social Medicine and Population Health \(CISMPH\) Fellowship](#) is a multidisciplinary training initiative designed for undergraduate, medical, public health, and other graduate students, those currently doing gap years, as well as early-career health professionals. The program aims to cultivate a new generation of scholars and practitioners dedicated to advancing health equity by bridging the gap between clinical care and the social, economic, and policy determinants of health. The fellowship will run year-long.

[Applications](#) for the current wave are due **November 30, 2025**.

New York Academy of Medicine - [David E. Rogers Student Fellowship Award](#) a \$4,000 grant funding 10 to 12-week research projects that bear on medicine, and dentistry as they contribute to the health of communities, and to address the human needs of underserved or disadvantaged patients or populations. The 2026 David E. Rogers Student Fellowship Award application cycle is now open and due on **January 20, 2026**.

Stay Connected

Join our Social Mission Alliance Scholars group on LinkedIn. Follow us on [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#).

We transform health professions education by mobilizing and amplifying learners, teachers, community leaders, policymakers, and their organizations to advance equity in education, research, service, policy, and practice.

