Project HEALTH works to break the link between poverty and poor health by mobilizing undergraduate volunteers to provide sustained public health interventions in partnership with urban medical centers, universities, and community organizations.

Project HEALTH envisions a new model of health care delivery, in which patients' unmet resource needs are systematically addressed as a standard element of patient care. In the urban hospitals and health centers where Project HEALTH's Family Help Desk programs operate, physicians can "prescribe" food, housing, job training, fuel assistance, health insurance, or other resources for their low-income patients as routinely as they do medication. Located in the clinic waiting room and staffed by college volunteers, these Family Help Desks "fill" these prescriptions by connecting patients with key community resources. Currently, Project HEALTH's corps of 600 volunteers staffs 17 Family Help Desks serving almost 4,000 families in six cities, including Chicago, Boston, Providence, New York City, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore.

Project HEALTH's Family Help Desk model is simple but effective: In clinics where we provide services, physicians can "prescribe" food or job training for their patients, and our undergraduate volunteers then "fill" these prescriptions by connecting patients with these and other community and government resources. Volunteers assist families in negotiating the diverse, fragmented landscape of resources, providing eligibility criteria, hours of operation, languages spoken, and directions. Often our volunteers' assistance is as straightforward, yet critical, as tracking down an agency phone number, bridging a language barrier, or searching through housing or job listings to find a match.

Faced with escalating health care costs, sharp disparities in health outcomes, and growing epidemics of chronic medical conditions, our country needs new models of health care delivery. Project HEALTH offers an innovative strategy for realizing just such a model, through the creation of a clinic-based infrastructure that addresses patients’ unmet resource needs while simultaneously nurturing and equipping the future champions of that infrastructure.

For more information about Project HEALTH please visit our website: www.projecthealth.org or contact:

Chinwe Onyekere, MPH
Executive Director
Project HEALTH NY
Harlem Hospital
506 Lenox Ave, mlk 17-101
New York, NY 10037
212-939-4135 (phone)
newyork@projecthealth.org

The Family Help Desk is located on the first floor of the Ron Brown Building in the Pediatrics waiting room. We are open this summer!!! Here are our summer hours:

Monday: 9-12pm, 1-4pm  Wednesday: 9-12pm
Tuesday: 9-12pm, 1-4pm  Thursday: 9-12pm

Doctors, Nurses, and Social Workers can refer to the Family Help Desk. To refer by phone please call: x8533.