



Course Title: Surgical Dimensions of Public Health

Course Instructor: Dr. Candice Carpenter

Course Description:

Surgical disease is a substantial global burden, with 143 million surgeries necessitated annually in order to assuage death and disability, especially in developing countries in Africa, Asia, and South America. But what exactly is the intersection of public health and surgery? Can all surgeons be part of the public health landscape, or is public health the province of internists, psychiatrists, and pediatricians? Ironically, most surgeons do not regularly consider public health principles to be part of their job, and even the U.S. Surgeon General, despite their moniker, tends to be a physician or healthcare professional with substantive public health experience, but typically no surgical experience. The course Surgical Dimensions of Public Health will address these questions, discussing those specialties like plastic and reconstructive surgery, which are gaining momentum within the surgical global health realm, while other surgical specialties relatively remain on the sidelines of this global imperative. The course will also elicit insight into how public health surgeons engage with surgical missions (the equivalent of medical missions) and also help to promote health equity and improve access to care. Additionally, it will confront the need for public health surgeons on a domestic front, as surgeons are compelled more than ever to confront the social determinants of health – health literacy, economic stability, food security, social support, and housing stability – that inexorably determine a surgical patient’s perioperative outcomes.