



### **MUN Med Gateway: Continuity in leadership and social accountability**

**Pauline Duke, Family Medicine; Adriana Castano-Kutty, Community Health and Humanities; Paul Crocker, Catherine Winsor, Undergraduate Medical Student; Jill Allison, Community Health and Humanities**

**Background** In St. John's, the MUN Med Gateway Project is a unique and successful program designed to facilitate access to health care for refugees and learning opportunities for medical students. Gateway began as a student initiative in 2006 and continues to promote social accountability and leadership development, operating with the continuous support of medical students and faculty. On June 18, 2012 students, faculty members and staff associated with Gateway participated in the nation-wide day of protest against cuts to health care funding for refugees in Canada. **Objectives** This presentation aims to highlight aspects of formative development in social accountability, from clinical encounter to informed response to society's needs, preparing students to meet the CANMEDs role of physician as advocate. **Methods** We trace events that lead to a convergence of MUN Med Gateway activities and student advocacy in response to proposed cuts to the Interim Federal Health Plan that would increase healthcare challenges for the refugee population. We identify the key outcomes related to educational objectives for medical students. **Results** The educational objectives promoted by MUN Med Gateway include engagement with an underserved, disadvantaged, and vulnerable population. The social action of June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012, provided an opportunity to extend the advocacy role in a public, collective and concrete activity. Students created placards, attended a press conference, rallied in a public forum and participate in media interviews. Nearly 3 dozen medical students, faculty and staff from the Faculty of Medicine participated in the action. Media interest was high and there was wide coverage on the local news as well as support from other social justice organizations in the city.

**Conclusions** Medical students report that this experience is important not only for career preparation but in developing leadership skills. The importance of social accountability and advocacy were demonstrated by the leadership of local physicians who provided excellent role modelling and mentorship.