

## Course Description

### *Pursuing Social Justice through Interdisciplinary Practice: The Medical/Legal Collaborative*

Interdisciplinary collaboration between lawyers and other professionals such as social workers, doctors, and mental health professionals is becoming increasingly common as a way to address the complex and multidimensional social problems faced by low-income clients. This seminar will explore one example of such interdisciplinary practice: the medical/legal collaborative. In the medical/legal collaborative, doctors and lawyers work together to improve the health and long-term outcomes of low-income children through legal and systemic advocacy.

Through such topics as access to legal and medical services, welfare reform and public benefits, safe and affordable housing, family violence and child safety, and the educational rights of disabled children, we will explore how lawyers can engage in creative problem solving with doctors to promote justice for families and improve child health. What are the benefits to clients/patients of interdisciplinary practice? What types of legal problems are better addressed through interdisciplinary practice? What are the ethical concerns for lawyers and doctors when practicing in an interdisciplinary setting?

Over the course of the semester, some class sessions will be held jointly with medical students taking a seminar in patient advocacy and social justice taught by Dr. Alicia Monroe at Brown Medical School. At these classes, law and medical students will explore ethical considerations and effective communication between lawyers and doctors through case simulations. Guest lecturers and facilitators, both legal and non-legal, will be used to explore the interdisciplinary nature of the topics.

This seminar will be required for students who plan to enroll in a public interest clerkship at the Rhode Island Family Advocacy Program, a medical/legal collaborative at Hasbro Children's Hospital, but will also be open to other interested students. Students will be required to participate in class discussion, prepare for case simulations, and write and present a research paper or applied research project.