

PHR STUDENT PROGRAM

Letter from the Chairs

*The Re-Institution of the Bi-Annual PHR Students
Newsletter*



Above: Current PHR SAB Members who attended the 2019 PHR National Student Conference. From left to right: Jessica Beer, Austin Herbst, Inkyu Kim, Maddie Sharp, Shefali Sood, Mike Dorittie, Meredith Peck, Kevin Ackerman, Steven Tau, and Natalie Walsh.

We as the 2019-2020 PHR Student Advisory Board (SAB) chairs are so excited to reinstate the PHR Newsletter. For a long time, the SAB has tried to find ways to keep PHR chapters and clinics in the know with PHR-related activities, events, opportunities, and calls to action around the country and the world, but dedication to our primary objective as medical students has interrupted continuity. This year, we have an incredible group of dedicated board members who are enthusiastic to share their accomplishments, ideas, and goals for the future.

After discussions with many chapter members across the country, we were surprised to find that few knew the role and structure of the SAB. To clarify, the SAB is a group of current medical students, selected by the previous board, divided into four committees with two chairs. The committees include advocacy (in charge of identifying key issues for our focus and assisting chapters in events), asylum and refugee (assisting chapters in starting and troubleshooting asylum clinics), Regional Chapter Mentors (RCMs, the liaison and point of contact between chapters and the board), the media committee (in charge of running our social media platforms), and the conference committee (responsible for hosting the annual PHR National student

Fall 2019	
Contents	
• Letter from the Chairs	1
• Who Is PHR???	2
• July 2019 Advocacy event: #CloseTheCamps	3
• 2019 PHR National Student Conference	5
• Update from the Advocacy Committee	7
• How to Start an Asylum Clinic	8
• Chapter Spotlight: Northwestern University PHR Chapter	9

Contact us!

phr.sab@gmail.com

phrstudents.com

Twitter: @PHR_students

Instagram: @phrstudents

[Facebook Link](#)

conference). A new group of board members is selected every year; so, if you are interested in joining the 2020-2021 SAB, please reach out to us!

We are delighted to share what we have done this year, but more importantly, we would like to hear from our chapters! Find our contact info above and on the final page of this newsletter and enjoy perusing!

Meredith Peck & Maddy Sharp; Co-chairs

Who Is PHR???

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) is an international NGO that mobilizes health professionals around the world in order to advocate health, dignity, and justice for all. The PHR National Student Program was created to develop a network of future leaders committed to ending human rights violations through careers guided by a human rights framework. To accomplish this, the student program attempts to highlight and engage in PHR's areas of involvement. For budding and active chapters alike, we encourage you to be aware of these areas of involvement as you plan educational and advocacy events.

PHR Focus Areas:

- Torture
- Asylum & Persecution
- Attacks on Health Care
- Killings & Mass Atrocities
- Sexual Violence
- Weapons
- When Doctors Harm

PHR focuses on collecting evidence within these focus areas to document human rights violations and support policy change. PHR is currently working on these issues in the following regions:

- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Iraq
- Kenya
- Myanmar & Bangladesh
- Syria
- United States



For a more complete picture of PHR's work, please visit the website: phr.org. The PHR student advisory board is always planning advocacy and educational events for students and we want to know what our fellow chapter members are doing as well! Please share your initiatives with us and remember you can always use us as a resource. See the last page of this newsletter for our contact info.



Check out the award-winning film "[For Sama](#)" which documents the crisis in Syria and in particular the attacks on healthcare facilities. PHR hosted a screening of the documentary December 5th, 2019. Now an Academy Award Nominee for Best Documentary Feature.



Above: Dr. Ranit Mishori, a senior medical advisor for PHR and a professor at Georgetown University's School of Medicine leads the rally against the separation of families and detention of children at the U.S.-Mexico border

July 2019 PHR Advocacy Event: #CloseTheCamps in Washington, D.C.

PHR has conducted research and collected data and medical evidence at the U.S.-Mexico border that exposes the harm being caused by immigration policies implemented by the Trump administration. For over a year, PHR has campaigned for justice for children at the U.S.-Mexico border. The campaign produced a letter signed by more than 60,000 people, demanding justice for children at the U.S. Southern border and calls on the U.S. administration to end the detention and separation of children. In June, PHR released two reports on human rights issues at the U.S. Southern border, 1) on the medical and mental health impacts of exposure to trauma in children seeking asylum, and 2) on how U.S. immigration enforcement is impacting patients in health facilities across the U.S.

On July 16, 2019, a group of PHR affiliates joined for a three-part day of mobilization culminating the campaign, which consisted of a meeting with the Department of Homeland Security, a demonstration in front of the White House, and then a briefing at PHR's offices.

A small group gathered at the Office of Civil Right and Civil Liberties Tuesday morning. Those in attendance included PHR's Michael Payne and Kathryn Hampton, PHR's close affiliates and network members Dr. Mishori and Dr. John Abraham, co-chair of PHR's Student Advisory Board Meredith Peck, Student Advisory Board asylum and refugee committee member Jessica Beer, and 4th year Georgetown student Aisha Lott. Mr. Payne led the briefing with support from Dr. Mishori and Ms. Hampton with focus on PHR's science-based research and evidence with the goal of driving policy change. Ms. Hampton discussed the dangerous conditions and trauma in the Northern Triangle followed by Mr. Payne recommending policy change, specific Safe Third Country agreements and new asylum restrictions. Dr. Mishori and Ms. Hampton detailed trauma occurring at the border, the issue of metering, separations of families, and conditions in ICE and CBP detention centers. Mr. Payne followed this discussion with policy recommendations such as increased oversight of detention centers, access for outsiders to review conditions in these centers,

implementation of standards of care, as well as presenting the results of the petition calling for justice for children and families at the U.S.-Mexico border. Ms. Dana Salvano-Dunn, the CRCL Compliance Director at DHS, and her team responded with thoughtful, pointed questions, recommended areas of further research, and encouraged continued dialogue between DHS and PHR.

Following the meeting at DHS, our small group joined a larger group of local medical students, many from Georgetown University School of Medicine (an institution with a very active asylum clinic), as well as other physicians and healthcare workers outside of the White House for a demonstration against the detention of families and children at the U.S. southern border. Attendees held signs reading “Seeking Asylum is a Legal Right,” “Doctors Against Detention,” “Our Rx = No Kids in Cages,” among others. Statements detailing the inhumane treatment of children and families at the U.S.-Mexico border were given by Kathryn Hampton, Meredith Peck, Dr. Ranit Mishori, and Dr. John Abraham. After the demonstration, the group debriefed at PHR’s Washington D.C. office.

The PHR asylum network continues their work on the ground at the border documenting trauma, medical neglect, and the psychological sequelae in children separated from their families at the U.S. southern border. You can read the reports generated from this work at phr.org or follow the links in this newsletter in the PHR Reports section (right). Please consider staying connected to us for future demonstrations and days of mobilization. Your voices and actions matter. We are stronger together.

Meredith Peck is one of the Co-Chairs on the PHR Student Advisory Board

You can view footage from the demonstration on [Facebook](#)

PHR Reports



Zero Protection: How U.S. Border Protection Harms Migrant Safety and Health
[Zero Protection Report](#)



“There is no one here to protect you”: Trauma Fleeing Violence in Central America
[Child Trauma Report](#)



Not in my Exam Room: How U.S. Immigration Enforcement is Obstructing Medical Care
[Immigration Enforcement Report](#)



2019 PHR National Student Conference Harvard Medical School in Boston, MA

The Physicians for Human Rights 2019 National Student Conference was hosted this year on November 15-17 at Harvard Medical School. The conference was titled “Foreign Bodies: Fear of the (Un)Known”. The idea behind this theme was that many of the most pressing human rights topics of today, including many that were covered during the conference, stem from the belief of a certain “otherness” felt toward groups from those perpetrating the xenophobia, attacks, and hate. The “Un” in “Unknown” is in parentheses because persecuted ideas and peoples are treated as unknown, even though the knowledge, evidence, and data all support the contrary. The “Un” is an artificial tool used to create fear and attack others.

Over 100 students from around the nation gathered together to learn, discuss and be inspired by the lecturers and each other. Friday evening consisted of a poster session, with over 40 posters presented involving students’ work on global health, advocacy, human rights, and more.



The annual PHR national student conference is entirely student-run. Inkyu Kim (left) and Austin Herbst (right) served as the chairs of the 2019 Conference

Continued...

(Continued)

On Saturday, the day consisted of various lectures. Alan Jones, Chair of PHR’s Board, welcomed the students to the conference, and the rest of the day involved presentations by Susannah Sirkin and Dr. Gregg Greenough on the topic of Attacks on Health Care Workers, Dr. Hani Stoklosa on Human Trafficking, and Thomas McHale on Sexual Violence. A panel on Asylum was featured in the morning as well, moderated by Dr. Matthew Gartland with Sabi Ardalan, Dr. Katherine Peeler, and Dr. James Recht as panelists.

Ellie Lobovits, a videographer, screened her documentary “Birth at the Border,” followed by a talkback and reflection session. Saturday afternoon involved workshops, including sessions by Dr. Joia Mukherjee on Being an Advocate, Dr. Regina LaRocque and Dr. Gaurab Basu on Climate Change and Human Rights, Dr. Wes Boyd on Mental Health and Asylum, and Jenna Sherman on AI and Health.

Sunday was dedicated to workshops for students to learn “How to Use your Voice.” Workshops included Media and Human Rights presented by Samantha Kupferman, Op-Ed Writing by Dr. Jennifer Okwerekwu, and Legislative Advocacy by Dr. Fiona Danaher.

If you are interested in hosting the 2020 PHR National Student Conference at your institution, please contact the PHR SAB via e-mail at phrsab@gmail.com.

Inkyu Kin & Austin Herbst of the PHR SAB Conference Committee



Above (left to right): a breakout session with Dr. Mukherjee, welcome from PHR’s Board Chair Alan Jones, and Ellie Lobovits discussing her documentary



Above: Students pose at the photo booth organized by the PHR advocacy team



Above: PHR’s Susannah Sirkin joins Harvard’s Dr. Greenough to discuss attacks on health workers



Above: Jenna Sherman leads a breakout session on AI and health as students discuss the impacts



Left: Professionals join together to discuss topics related to asylum. From left to right: Dr. Matthew Gartland, Dr. Katherine Peeler, Sabi Ardalan, and Dr. James Recht.

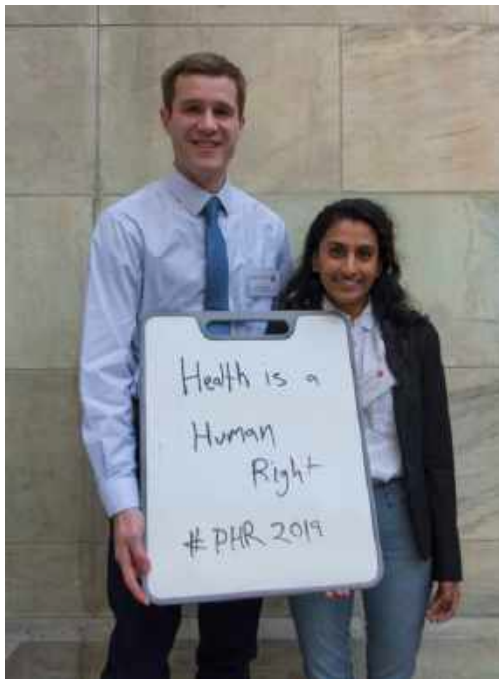
Update from the 2019-2020 PHR SAB Advocacy Committee

Reproductive Justice Project

The PHR National Student Advocacy Committee is undertaking a narrative project to create a space for patients and health personnel to share stories that are grounded in lived experiences and demonstrate the persistent challenges surrounding reproductive justice in the U.S. and worldwide.

We aim to give voice to those who wish to speak about their experience with healthcare systems in the context of reproductive health. As a collective, these narratives will serve as a platform to advocate for reproductive justice, encompassing comprehensive, accessible reproductive health care and expanding abortion rights, in particular for marginalized populations. We hope these narratives will capture the interplay of race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and politics that frame the fight for reproductive rights — our stories are a call to action against continued threats to reproductive justice.

For more information and submission details, please see here: <https://www.phrstudents.com/reproductivejustice>



Left: Advocacy Committee Members Mike Dorritie and Shefali Sood at the 2019 National Student Conference

Advocacy Blog — Call for Submissions

To all interested students: the PHR National Student Advocacy Committee is excited to continue accepting posts for our student-run blog written by any medical student who wants their voice to be heard! Our perspectives as students and future physicians are very powerful, and we want to showcase your ideas and work. The posts submitted and accepted can be about anything related to science/medicine, humanitarianism, or human rights, including the experiences you have had throughout medical school or with PHR asylum clinics. If you are passionate about and would like to advocate for any issues, please consider writing and submitting a post!

Submission Requirements

Media Forms Accepted:

- Blog Post (Word Limit: 1000 words or 1-2 pages)
- Petitions
- Scientific Abstracts (Word Limit: 250 words)
- Perspective Pieces

For examples of previous submissions, please visit the blog page at :

<https://www.phrstudents.com/blog>

Send submissions to phradvocacy@gmail.com with subject line “PHR Blog Post”

Questions? Please contact phradvocacy@gmail.com.

Join Our PHR Students National Advocacy Listserv:

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/phr-advocacy>

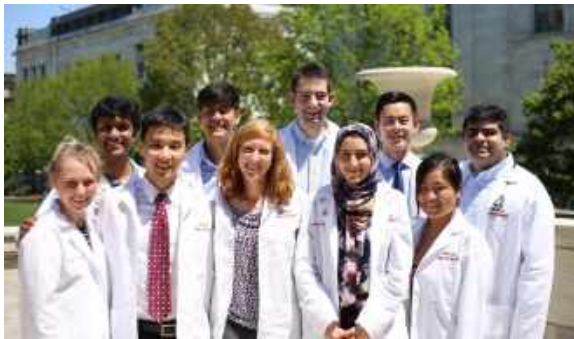
Expand your Reach: How to Start an Asylum Clinic

One of the most impactful programs our student chapters and affiliated groups take on is the creation and operation of an asylum clinic.

What is an asylum clinic?

At its core, an asylum clinic housed at a medical school is a student-run program that connects Physicians for Human Rights (PHR)-trained clinicians to political asylum seekers and their attorneys. These clinicians conduct forensic medical or mental health evaluations to uncover signs and sequelae of torture or trauma and document their findings in affidavits that serve as evidence in the client's legal application for asylum.

Currently, PHR has approximately 20 affiliated/partnered Asylum Clinics across the country. PHR has relationships with an additional 20 or so student-run Asylum clinics with which we share resources, data, and encourage research presentation at our National Conference.



For more information:

E-mail our Asylum & Refugee Committee:

phr.asylumrefugee@gmail.com

Visit our Website to access the Asylum Clinic Guide:

<https://www.phrstudents.com/>

Interested in Starting an Asylum Clinic?

The need for asylum evaluations is staggering. Our Asylum and Refugee Committee members have compiled a checklist for the successful implementation of an asylum clinic at your institution:

1. Create your team: This should be a group of a few dedicated students and at least one faculty member who performs asylum evaluations and is ready to support your efforts with supervision and advice as the group's Physician Advisor.

2. Evaluate your community for need and resources.

Some places to start:

- NGO's that serve the refugee community, asylum seekers and/or torture survivors
- Homeless Shelters that see a significant population of newly arrived refugees
- Free Clinics
- Law schools with clinics that specialize in representing immigrants or asylum seekers
- You can also check with the PHR asylum program to see if they have a high concentration of requests from lawyers in your area

These can all be sources of referrals for your program once it is up and running.

3. Meet with your administration: Use the data gathered during your community evaluation to approach your administration with a proposal for an asylum program. You'll need their support and they will likely have ethical and legal concerns you may not have thought about. Having your Clinician supervisor's support through this process will be key.

4. Recruit clinicians to do evaluations: These can be clinicians who are already trained to do forensic evaluations and also interested clinicians who can attend upcoming trainings. It's best to get as many clinicians (and medical students) as possible trained. Medical students generally help during the evaluations by acting as scribes and then writing the first draft of the affidavit. Some programs eventually have a centralized location where clinicians can perform the evaluations but at the beginning, most evaluations take place in the clinicians' offices after hours or during a blocked off appointment time.

5. Start placing cases referred from community partners: Yay! Usually the student organizers will be the point of contact between the clinician and the legal team as well as the medical student assigned to the case. But sometimes the clinician will have an established relationship with a particular lawyer and the student organizers can recruit a student to join an evaluation that is set up by the clinician.

Jessica Beer is on the Asylum & Refugee Committee of the PHR SAB

Chapter Spotlight: PHR Student Program at Northwestern University



Since its foundation this past spring, the Northwestern University Physicians for Human Rights Student Program has been dedicated to providing opportunities for undergraduate students to become involved in advocacy for health-based human rights issues. Although most PHR chapters nationally are run by medical students, Northwestern's chapter was established by dedicated undergraduate students such as Natalie Smith and her team of officers. As founder and president of the PHR Student Program at Northwestern, Natalie first became interested in PHR's mission when she learned about the associated network of asylum clinics at medical schools across the country. After completing an asylum training through the Weill Cornell School of Medicine, Natalie became increasingly interested in bringing

the PHR Student Program to Northwestern as a way for undergraduate students passionate about human rights to connect with graduate students and medical professionals working in the field, as well as to equip them with the skills necessary to be effective advocates.

This year, the Northwestern PHR Chapter has chosen to focus on one health-based human rights issue for each of their academic quarters: health equity, human trafficking, and refugee health, respectively. This has provided a way for the chapter to engage Northwestern's student body through events such as discussions, documentary screenings, and letter writing, while laying the groundwork for more extensive projects. At present, they are planning a panel on the roles of medical and legal professionals in combating human trafficking for their winter term and a symposium on refugee health to be held this spring.

Natalie and her leadership team's long-term goal is to establish programs that draw upon the skills and passions of their members to address practical needs in the Chicago community. One manifestation of this is an initiative to establish an asylum clinic at Northwestern's Feinberg School of

Medicine; as they have begun to pursue this objective, they have met many medical students passionate about the cause and excited to become involved in this project—connections which they hope will ultimately lead to the establishment of a joint PHR chapter between Northwestern's undergraduate and graduate campuses. Additionally, they hope to develop partnerships with other Northwestern departments and community organizations that will allow their program to address community needs and to reach a broader audience.

The PHR Student Advisory Board was excited to have the Northwestern PHR Chapter join the family in the spring of 2019. We are in awe of the dedication and industriousness of Natalie and her team and look forward to continue working with them and future leaders for years to come!

Katee Trihn and Nina Mascia make up the Media Committee of the PHR SAB



Contact us!

phr.sab@gmail.com

Website: phrstudents.com

Twitter: [@PHR_students](https://twitter.com/PHR_students)

Instagram: [@phrstudents](https://www.instagram.com/phrstudents)

Facebook

