



Weill Cornell Medical College

The Weill Cornell Center for Human Rights

Issue No. 2 | February 2015

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Evaluations

Feb 2015 evaluations: 2

Total evaluations to date: 193

Upcoming Events

Faculty training

March 26, 2015

NY Asylum Network Luncheon

April 11, 2015

Announcement

On **Thursday, March 26th, from 7 to 10pm**, WCCHR will be holding a training session for physicians/clinicians interested in becoming forensic evaluators. Please RSVP to Sarah Littlehale (sal2031@med.cornell.edu). See next page for details.



Meeting Dr. Ross MacDonald

At our February monthly meeting, the WCCHR student board members had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Ross MacDonald, Medical Director of the Bureau of Correctional Health Services for the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Dr. MacDonald earned his MD from Weill Cornell Medical College and completed his residency in Social Internal Medicine at Montefiore Medical Center. His current role as Medical Director involves oversight of the care provided in the NYC jail system, formulation and application of DOHMH policy on a wide range of medical conditions, training of clinical staff, and direct patient care. During our meeting, Dr. MacDonald led a discussion on health care in the NYC jail system and the health risks of incarceration. Approximately 170 NYC inmates per day undergo medical intake, and there are 500 medical follow-up visits per day for management of chronic conditions. The most frequent medical issues among inmates include substance abuse (> 50%), mental illness, and infectious diseases such as hepatitis C and HIV. Often, incarceration actually worsens health risks for inmates by fostering an environment that increases rates of injury, self-harm, infectious disease transmission, and interruptions in medication regimens for chronic diseases such as HIV and diabetes. We'd like to thank Dr. MacDonald for introducing these important and relevant topics to our education.

Upcoming: Faculty Training for Forensic Evaluations

On **Thursday, March 26th, at 7-10pm**, WCCHR will be holding a training session for physicians/clinicians interested in becoming psychiatric/psychological, medical, or gynecological forensic evaluators. The training will include an introduction to WCCHR and instruction on how to conduct a forensic evaluation and how to write a legal affidavit. We will also discuss how evaluators can become more involved with the clinic by becoming mentors in research or community projects. Please be reminded that evaluators are free to determine their own level of commitment in terms of number of evaluations conducted.

The training will be held at the **WCMC Public Health Building (402 E 67th St), Level C1, Room B**. For those of you who are already evaluators, we encourage you to reach out to your colleagues and invite them to attend. For those who are not currently evaluators, we encourage you to come to the training! Please RSVP to Sarah Littlehale (sal2031@med.cornell.edu).

In the News

WCCHR joins the Immigration Defense Project in celebrating the “Best Breakup Ever: ICE out of Rikers”

On February 14, 2015, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was officially shut down on Rikers Island for the first time. The closure was a result of a bill signed into law by Mayor Bill de Blasio on November 14, 2014 that sought to limit ICE’s ability to detain New York City immigrants unless there was a public safety concern and to weaken ties between ICE and local law enforcement. Previously, ICE could detain immigrants for months at a time for minor offenses in an effort to deport those who were undocumented.

These “detainers” often needlessly divided immigrant families and disrupted communities. With the new laws in place, immigration officials will be required to present a judicial warrant to request that an immigrant be held in custody, and even with the warrant, the city will not detain immigrants unless they have a violent criminal history or are on the terrorist watch list. To celebrate the passing of these new laws and the removal of ICE from Rikers, the Immigration Defense Project began a social media campaign “#bestbreakupever.” Read more about Introductions 486-A and 487-A here: <http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/520-14/mayor-bill-de-blasio-signs-law-bills-dramatically-reduce-new-york-city-s-cooperation-with#/o>.



Spotlight on...

Alejandro Lopez, MD/PhD Candidate

Alejandro Lopez is a fourth year MD-PhD student at the Tri-Institutional Weill Cornell/Sloan-Kettering/Rockefeller Program. He received his BS in Chemistry from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez (UPRM), graduating in 2011. As an undergraduate, he received a MARC U-STAR scholarship (Minority Access to Careers in Research) and was involved in various programs that promote participation and professional development of minority students in research and the sciences, including the Alliance for Minority Participation. Alejandro entered Weill Cornell Medical College in 2011 and joined the student board of WCCHR in 2012. He first worked as student scheduler in 2012 and then as case scheduler in 2013. Alejandro then served as Executive Director in 2014. Working with WCCHR has intensified Alejandro's sense of duty to social justice and equality.



Thomas Kalman, MS, MD

Having performed numerous psychological asylum evaluations, Dr. Thomas Kalman has been an invaluable asset to WCCHR. He has been a faculty evaluator for The Center since 2011. Dr. Kalman earned his BA in English Literature from the University of Pennsylvania, his MD from New York Medical College, and his MS from New York University. In addition to having a full-time practice, he is currently a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at WCMC and an Adjunct Associate Professor of Psychiatry at New York Medical College. His published research includes over 30 articles on a variety of topics, most recently on split-treatment, which involves two collaborating clinicians who, together, provide both psychotherapy and psychopharmacological treatment for one patient. We'd like to thank Dr. Kalman for the immense time and effort he has put into evaluating our asylum applicants.

