

March 22, 2019

Hi Everyone,

Reasoned advocacy aimed at improving health and well-being is part of the academic mission of our Department of Pediatrics. Indeed it is highlighted in our [Mission, Vision, Values Statement](#) and in our tangible efforts in Northern & Native Health, Global Health and Social Pediatrics, and indeed wherever we care for kids.

This week's Departmental Acknowledgment to **Samir Shaheen-Hussain**, a member of our Division of Emergency Medicine for being a runner-up in the Faculty category for the Principal's Prize for Public Engagement through Media. Samir was recognized for the #aHand2Hold campaign that effectively moved the needle on a longstanding egregious policy that prevented children from remote Northern communities being accompanied by their parents on long transfers from their communities to our hospitals for care.

I thought I would share with our community what I wrote in support of Samir's nomination:

Dr. Shaheen-Hussain is a full-time Assistant Professor (CAS) in the Department of Pediatrics in our Division of Emergency Medicine. The Department has a mandated responsibility to care for indigenous children through our longstanding and innovative Northern & Native Health Program. These children frequently come from the remotest geographic regions of Quebec and at times of an acute illness require an expeditious air transfer. As a front-line clinician Dr. Shaheen-Hussain provides direct care to these vulnerable ill children and could not help be struck by a longstanding egregious Governmental policy that mandated that these ill children would be transferred without the accompaniment of their parents. As these transfers can take up to hours, at times of medical uncertainty involving considerable cultural dislocation, one can only imagine how damaging and disruptive they were to the children and families involved.

Motivated by his passion for humanitarian values, Dr. Shaheen-Hussain set out to change this ill-advised and inhumane long established Ministerial policy. He did so through effective media engagement that was 'bottoms-up' and broadly participatory in its approach, done in partnership with stakeholders (in particular First Nations communities), involved McGill learners, inter-disciplinary in formulation, based on evidence, targeting traditional and social media, and most importantly impactful in mediating change. Indeed impact was rapid leading to an announced change of policy in less than a year.

In this undertaking, Dr. Shaheen-Hussein embodied the McGill value of engagement with the wider community in which the academy can effect meaningful change. He also actualized many aspects of our Departmental Vision & Values; 1. Effective advocacy on behalf of vulnerable pediatric populations as an engaged partner with the communities we serve, 2. Compassionate caring that is at all times in partnership with the children and families we serve; culturally sensitive in its orientation; and shared between disciplines, professions, and allied community-based partners, 3. Dedication to knowledge translation that improves pediatric health care practice and outcomes, that is evidence-based in its choices, that is innovative, and that provides objective rationale for policy makers.

Please join me in congratulating Samir on the good work he did for these children and families.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael

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