UNIVERSITIES ALLIED FOR ESSENTIAL MEDICINES

NORTH AMERICAN NEWSLETTER-FALL 2018

IN THIS ISSUE

Wrapping up 2018!

by Victoria El-Hayek and Sernah Essien

As we near the end of 2018, we would like to thank all of our supporters, allies, and of course, our passionate, driven student activists. This year has been marked with struggles that have required resistance, collaboration, community, and mobilization. Within our network, our students have been busy working towards open science, pushing for global access licensing at their universities, and communicating with their governments about how to provide equitable access to medicines. We have had students challenge universities to hold themselves accountable to their social contract, present at the United Nations, and so much more. Yet, there is still more work to be done. We look forward to the new year and encourage you to prepare yourself for the opportunities, challenges, and wins it may bring.

2018 North American Conference

Our annual conference is the cornerstone of UAEM's efforts to empower students and help inspire the next generation of diverse global health leaders. The fall conference represents a key moment when students already active or interested in UAEM meet to exchange experiences and network with UAEM allies and NGO representatives, academics and other global health actors. By educating students on substantive issues related to access to medicines, our annual conference serves to foster a well-informed, socially-conscious, internationally coordinated membership.

This year marks the first time the North American conference was hosted in Montreal, Canada from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st October 2018. More than 100 student leaders from around the world attended the event. Organized by the chapter at McGill University and supported by UAEM staff, the team worked together to select new and existing allies from different health and social justice movements to inspire our team of teams. As a continued effort to ensure diversity among our students and speakers and making a concerted effort to build partnerships with new allied organizations, during this year's conference we were joined by a recently established chapter from Colombia (National University of Colombia), new students from the University of Pittsburgh, along with new allies such as Arts Corps (whose themes involve youth, equity and access) in conjunction with veteran student leaders from Brazil and Europe and long-term allies in the movement.

Student leadership was the theme of the day, as numerous students from across the network shared their accomplishments from the year and goals for the year ahead. Coordinating Committee (CC) members and CC Fellows also provided peer-to-peer training to empower other students to lead or join campaigns at the campus, national and global levels.

Student leaders recognized at the 2018 North American Conference

Each year, UAEM North America recognizes a student and a chapter that has been a driving force for change in access to medicines on their campus and in their communities. Those recognized include leaders who've gone above and beyond to empower and support new members or rising leaders in the network. This year's student award goes to Isabel Levine of McGill University, and the chapter award goes to UAEM at Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS).

(left): MCPHS representatives Shreya Asher and Rohan Zaveri accept their chapter award.
(Right): Isabel Levine accepting her student award along with UAEM North America Executive Director Merith Basey and Board president, Taylor Gilliand.

Announced at the 2018 North American Annual Conference: McGill University to adopt Global Access Licensing Framework!

By Christine Kim and Isabel Levine

We have faced a lot of opposition and roadblocks along the way – it took our collective effort as the UAEM family that provided insight, help, and support to have years of advocacy work finally pay off and come to fruition. We are looking forward to shifting our chapter focus on new initiatives on transparency and accountability, to pull McGill further towards UAEM's missions!

After a long series of deliberations with McGill University's Technology Tranfser Office (TTO), and many creative advocacy events, the McGill administration has agreed to post a version of the Global Access Licensing Framework publicly on their website. The McGill UAEM chapter, with help from the CC and Rachel Kiddell-Monroe, is now in the process of finalizing the wording of the document with the TTO. The McGill chapter is very excited about this news, and looks forward to the eventual posting of the document. To read more about GALF at McGill and more progress made recently throughout Canada, **check out the following press statement HERE!**

M132 Health Committee

The adoption of global licensing principles (GAL) by two leading universities in Canada comes at a critical moment for Canada as UAEM Advisory Board Member Rachel Kiddell-Monroe and Student member Louise Kyle testified on October 18th in front of the Standing Committee on Health on Bill M-132. On behalf of UAEM the team proposed the adoption of GAL principles as the starting point to many new medicines for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The adoption of GAL would attach a non-exclusive licensing requirement to any funding from the CIHR, a publicly-funded institution that invests $1 billion every year in health research. "What we see is, it's actually a very simple proposition. Basically, it's that medicines funded by the public should be accessible to the public" said Kiddell-Monroe.

Dr. Jason Nickerson of Doctors without Borders Canada also served as a key witness calling for increased transparency, and reinforcing UAEM's position on publicly-funded research: "ensuring a public return on public investment should be a guiding principle of publicly funded health research".

The commitments made by McGill and the University of Calgary, combined with the efforts of the current Canadian government to curtail high drug costs, marks a historic shift in the discourse surrounding affordable healthcare. Public institutions are working towards implementing effective solutions that do justice to public funding of medical research. These commitments signal to the rest of the country--and to other publicly funded institutions worldwide--that Canada is a shining example of dedication to its people and their health.

Access to Medicines Week November 5-11

Access to Medicines Week this year will focus on the theme of transparency, engaging chapters around the world with the topic of this year's Global Campaign! Chapters will be convening expert panels, screening movies like Fire in the Blood and How To Survive a Plague, and participating in creative actions like window-washing and flyering to draw attention to the lack of transparency in funding of R&D and in the results of clinical trials. To follow along with the Access to Medicines Week happenings on university campuses, track the #access2meds hashtag on social media and watch for updates on the UAEM Global Facebook group. And to show your solidarity, you can add the official Access to Medicines Week Facebook frame to your profile picture, by searching "Universities Allied for Essential Medicines" at facebook.com/profilepicframes! Also be sure to follow our Instagram account to see updates of what people are doing around the world this Access to Medicines week: @uaem_meds4people
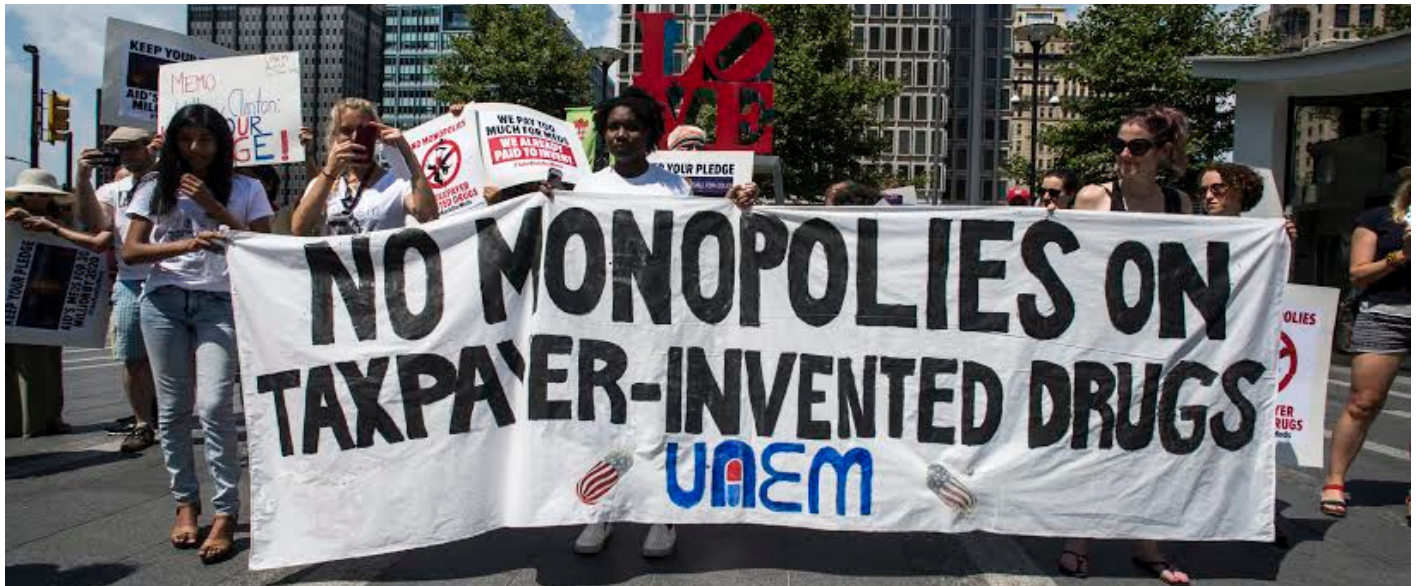
Black Friday. Cyber Monday.

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

November 27, 2018

Help kick off the giving season and make a difference this year by donating to UAEM on Giving Tuesday!

On November 27, 2018, UAEM is participating in an international day of giving – #GivingTuesday. Each year, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving is a global day dedicated to giving back. This is the perfect time to support UAEM and help us reach our goal of 400 donations! Last year, UAEM was able to get 222 donations in 24 hours getting us second place out of over 4,000 organizations!

Donate on November 27 **here!**

Xtandi Campaign Update

by Ambika Verma and Reshma Ramachandran

On October 31st, UCLA's deans, including Dr. Kelsey C. Martin, the Dean of the David Geffen School of Medicine and John Mazziotta, the CEO of the UCLA Health System invited UAEM members and medical students to discuss updates regarding Xtandi and the patent claim in India preventing a generic version of the medicine from entering the market. UCLA's Deans have expressed hope to negotiate terms of the license agreement with Pfizer and Astellas, ultimately aiming to renegotiate cost for Xtandi for certain populations. UAEM plans to continue to keep the pressure on the university to live up to its social mission as a public university and drop the patent claim.

Meet Our Newest Intern: Ambika Verma

Ambika Verma is a 2nd year student at UCLA majoring in Human Biology and Society. In addition to being involved with UAEM, she is also a Director in the UCLA Undergraduate Students Association Council's Office of the President, a volunteer at the Ronald Regan Medical Center, a member of the Advisory Board on Participatory Democracy with the Nevada Secretary of State, an associate with the Fellowship for International Service and Health, and a research assistant in the Sack Lab. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, taking photos, hiking, and spending time with her family and friends. She is very excited about her involvement with UAEM and is looking forward to what she can accomplish in her time with UAEM!

UAEM at the UN!

by Chloe Stone and Sernah Essien

Through UAEM, we had the privilege of attending the United Nations high level meeting on the fight to end tuberculosis. The U.N. had formerly held just five high level meetings to organize integrated approaches toward ending epidemics such as HIV/AIDS and Ebola; thus, holding the meeting itself was an action indicative of the U.N.'s commitment to combat tuberculosis with collaboration from member states and civil society.

Our journey began with a team of UAEMers from around North America, many of whom had not met each other until the big day in New York. Prior to the meeting, we spent months planning out details regarding social media strategies, creating policy briefs, which related side events we would attend, and more. This process really highlighted the best parts of UAEM as we got to pick
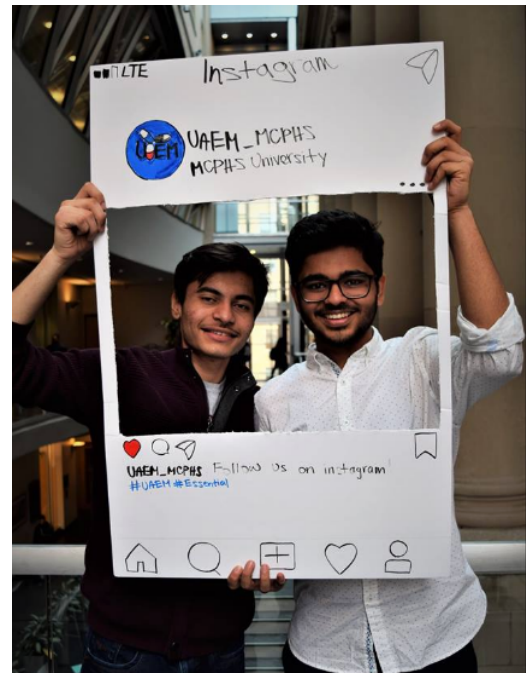

UAEM past and present at a U.N. side event

others' brains and learn from their knowledge and experience while using our collective knowledge and resources to create an approach to address a global epidemic through an access to medicines lens.

The days surrounding the high-level meeting included a packed schedule of side events happening around the topic of ending tuberculosis. A wide array of events were presented-- some sponsored by NGOs, some sponsored by tech, and others sponsored by governments.

This pilot project revealed benefits and limitations of attending UN High Level Meetings. Overall, it was deemed a worthwhile endeavour – a useful mechanism to develop student empowerment, recruit students, and make quantitative impact at the international level. If a similar opportunity arises, it is recommended that UAEM continue to invest in this event.

UAEM member Sernah Essien at the U.N. high level meeting on tuberculosis

Putting Care Back into Healthcare: MCPHS Boston Conference

by Amitoj Singh

On October 6th, 2018 the Boston Chapter of UAEM in MCPHS, held a transparency seminar "Putting Care Back into Healthcare". Approximately 100 students of MCPHS University of varying ages and medical majors attended the seminar. This seminar consisted of a panel of guest speakers who discussed the varying perspectives on medication pricing and need for transparency, three workshops targeting different issues, and a Transparency 101 presentation to talk about the facts surrounding medication pricing and the opioid epidemic.

The overall goal for this seminar was to empower future health care professionals to advocate for access to essential medications by creating a platform starting with this seminar and medication case (Narcan). The three main issues discussed were transparency, access, and empowerment.

The panel of guest speakers are as follows: Dr. Scott G. Weiner (Attending Emergency Physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital), Paul Bowman (Chapter Director of Boston NAMA, the National Alliance for Medication Assisted Recovery), Sernah Essien

(active UAEM member pursuing a Masters of Science in Biomedical Sciences and a Masters of Public Health at Tufts School of Medicine), and Alexandra R. Greenberg (MSHP, serves on the Global Executive Committee for UAEM, and Steering and Executive Committees for Right Care Alliance). The panel approached the topic of medication pricing and transparency from different perspectives depending on their backgrounds, which provided the audience the perspectives of a doctor, a patient, a healthcare student, and an NPO representative.

The "Transparency 101" presentation was conducted by Sernah Essien and provided the audience with an overview/background of the pricing issue, along with specific quantitative facts about the significant rise in prices. This drove the panel and got the attendees involved in the discussion.

Overall, the seminar was a great success and had a positive response from the attendees, many of whom followed up wanting to know more about UAEM and what role they could play to make a difference!

Branching Out in Pittsburgh

On September 17th UAEM presented a Teach-in on 'Health Equity, Justice & Access to Medicines: from the Global to the Local' at Pittsburgh University School of Medicine. Supported on campus by UAEM alum, Dr Braveen Ragunanthan, a current medical resident at the University and UAEM Executive Director Merith Basey. Our general goal was to motivate and inspire a new group of students and residents about how to take action locally in ways that can impact globally whether through research into Neglected Diseases, urging the university to license an innovation developed on campus (like sutezolid) in a socially responsible way or working to introduce global access licensing on campus.

The panelists featured were: 1. Dr Ertem White Tulip Health Foundation 2. Dr Pettigrew, Faculty Advisor for the Student National Medical Association 3. Sharonann Lynch – MSF Access Campaign Policy Adviser on HIV and TB 4. Braveen Ragunanthan – Resident Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, UAEM alum, Pittsburgh Resident and co-lead of the Sutezolid campaign at Johns Hopkins University. Merith Basey, UAEM North America Executive Director, moderated the panel.

We were able to leverage the event as an opportunity to invite students, in particular those from our partner organization Student National Medical Association (SNMA) to participate in our annual Fall Conference at McGill University. Overall seven new students joined us at McGill University from 19th to the 20th October (with just a month's notice!).

Thanks for an inspiring year!

(Left): Just a portion of the group who joined us in Montreal for this year's North American Conference.
(Right): A few of the members of the Pittsburgh organizer team at their presentation.