The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines homelessness as a person who primarily resides in a place “not meant for human habitation” such as a car, park, sidewalk or abandoned building, or is being evicted within a week from a private dwelling or institution (jail, recovery home, etc.) with the lack of resources and support to arrange a subsequent housing plan.  

Chronic Homelessness: An individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for over one year OR has had four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

Demographics in Worcester (2013):
- Income below poverty line: 30.5%
- 1,796 homeless persons (0.2% of the population)
- Homeless with Mental Illness: 22.2%
- Homeless with Substance Abuse Disorder: 10.8%

Combating Homelessness in Worcester
Michelle Silver, Brendan Innes, Ivan Zvonar, Karsten Schick, Sam Carley and Erik Garcia, MD
Population Health Clerkship
University of Massachusetts Medical School: School of Medicine and Graduate School of Nursing

Quarterly Census
4 times a year, Eliot Outreach travels through Worcester to collect data on the subset of homeless individuals living unsheltered.

General Takeaways
- Homelessness is strongly interconnected with a lack of social support
- Alleviating homelessness is often a long process that involves re-integration into services and multiple attempts to address the contributing factors

Our role as Future Clinicians
- Ability to refer clients to pertinent services for their conditions
- Appreciate the complicated backgrounds of these individuals and subsequent comprehensive health needs

References
1. Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance. from http://www.cmhaonline.org/
2. U.S. Census Bureau. from http://www.census.gov/
4. UMass Memorial Community Health Link http://www.communityhealthlink.org/chl/

Acknowledgements
We would like to thank the Homeless Outreach Advocacy Program, Community Health Link, Family Health Center, Hector Reyes House, Safe Haven, St. Francis Soup Kitchen, Department of Public Health, Queen Street Shelter, Beryl House, Transitional Placement Program, and all of the wonderful staff who work at these agencies. We would like to thank Dr. Erik Garcia, Brian Bickford, Jaime Valkeos, Barbara Lucci, Stephanie, Dr. Hugh Silk, Jane Whelen, Dr. Su Ping Feman, Joyce Landers, and all other members of the community who made this experience possible.