Living with a Disability
Samantha Martin, Angeline Ngo, Lauren O'Loughlin, Kristos Tase, Helen Tian, Lindsey Weiss, Dr. Linda Long-Bellil Ph.D. J.D. 1

1 Center for Health Policy and Research, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, University of Massachusetts Medical School

INTRODUCTION
The aim of this clerkship was to expose students to the unique challenges of living with a disability, as well as the resources and assistive technology available for people with disabilities to achieve equal access.

POPULATION BACKGROUND
• 1 in 5 adults in the United States has a disability
• The most common functional disability type is mobility disability
• The annual incidence of spinal cord injury is approximately 17,500 new cases each year
• Autonomic dysreflexia is a life threatening medical emergency seen in patients with spinal cord injuries at the T6 level and above
• 2 to 3 out of every 1,000 children in the US are born with a detectable level of hearing loss in one or both ears
• After years of advocacy, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990. People with disabilities fought for these civil rights, but the fight for equal access is still ongoing.

SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT
We completed our service learning project at the Worcester Public Schools Transition Program. This program assists young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 who have a variety of intellectual and physical disabilities with building life skills and bridging the gap between high school and adulthood. We first met with the students to learn about each other on a more personal level. The following week, we returned to the program to lead a healthcare-focused teaching session to the students.

The students in the transition program rotated through the stations in small groups. We learned to adapt our teaching methods to suit the needs of each group. We focused not only on teaching the students about the different topics, but also on building their trust with the medical community.

The 6 topics covered were:
• Body parts
• Hygiene
• Nutrition
• Vital signs
• Pain scale
• Medical forms

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REFERENCES