Doctors and Lawyers
Exploring the Many Facets of the Relationship

Course Goal(s)
This M4 Elective offers students a two-week course which explores the relationship between doctors and lawyers and the many ways in which the two professions interact. Although the relationship between doctors and lawyers is often characterized as contentious or worse, doctors and lawyers collaborate on an almost daily basis with regard to a variety of issues, many of which pose significant ethical issues for doctors as they seek to fulfill their ethical obligations to their patients. Questions to be considered in the course include the following:

1. How to handle conversations with lawyers - disclosing or withholding information, determining your ethical responsibilities to cooperate or refuse, and deciding the extent of your participation.
2. How to respond to contact from lawyers - with whom is such information shared, how much information is shared, the effect of the physician-patient relationship on disclosure.
3. How to discuss capacity issues - making capacity determinations across the medical and legal disciplines, discussing capacity with lawyers, determining the effect of your patient's capacity upon your participation and cooperation.
4. How to navigate the guardianship/conservatorship/civil commitment process with lawyers - how capacity issues affect your conversations with lawyers, deciding how or if to advocate in proceedings to determine your patient's civil rights, the effect of guardianship/conservatorship/civil commitment on continuing patient care and advocacy.
5. How (or if) to discuss patient treatment with lawyers.
6. How to help lawyers advocate for your patients.
7. How to address when the representation of a lawyer affects patient care.
8. Exploring the conventional wisdom behind the relationship between doctors and lawyers - Valid? Invalid?

Educational Objectives
1. To explore and understand the various contexts in which lawyers and doctors interact and how the purposes of that interaction affect the ethical obligations of each.
2. To identify and understand the relative roles of doctors and lawyers in determining and addressing the capacity of patients to make their own decisions, direct their own treatment and participate in legal proceedings.
3. To understand how lawyers and doctors may collaborate in an interdisciplinary setting to best serve the holistic needs of patients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Readings</th>
<th>TBD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Course Activities/Experience** | - Lectures, clinics, conferences to be attended? The course will be taught through a combination of directing readings, short lectures and discussions. The primary method of instruction will be through the assignment in advance of readings to be discussed followed by a facilitated discussion of those readings in a round table fashion. These discussions will be introduced by a short lecture each week on the topic – no more than 10-15 in duration.  
- In what location will students be observed on this elective? In the classroom setting only.  
- How will students receive mid-course, formative feedback of their performance? Feedback will be provided through the review of reflective posts and class participation. Concluding feedback is provided in response to a short, reflective paper at the end of the course.  
- Oral presentation, written assignments required? No oral presentation required, other than class participation in discussion. Written assignments as indicated above – reflective paper and weekly discussion board posts.  
- Research requirement? Research required on the topic of choice for the short reflective paper, though the research required would be only that which is necessary to address the topic knowledgeably. |

| Student Performance & Assessment | Overall student performance will be assessed by direct observation and by review of written materials. Student performance will be assessed on the basis of a participation grade (40%), discussion post grade (30%) and final reflective paper grade (30%). |

| Other Info | |