**PETER J. MALLOW**

**2023 AFMIX CAPSTONE SUBMISSION**

**GRANT PROPOSAL**

***Catholic Moral Teaching and Healthcare:***

***An Immersive Learning Experience***

**Executive Summary:**

Catholic hospitals provide care to 1 in 7 of all patients in the US. The recent supreme court ruling Dobbs vs. Jackson Women’s Health Center has brought to the forefront the tensions between an individual’s right to healthcare and a provider’s right to deliver healthcare consistent with its social and moral teachings. An immersive learning trip will embark over Spring Break to explore this tension from the perspective of the hospital providers. A small group of students and faculty advisor will visit four midwestern Catholic hospitals – two urban and two rural. The expected outcome will be a deeper understanding of this tension and self-confidence of the students to navigate this tension in their own healthcare careers.

**Proposal:**

There are 654 hospitals affiliated with the Catholic Church in the United States and provide care to 1 in 7 of all patients.[1] These hospitals are required to adhere the Ethical and Religious Directives (ERDs) for Catholic Health Care Services as set for the by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.[2] The ERDs specify the medical care in such a manner that is congruent with Catholic moral and social teaching. In many communities, especially rural areas, the only hospital services available and accessible are those affiliated with the Catholic Church.[3] A lack of accessibility to other providers may create a tension between an individual’s right to medical care as permitted by US law versus the services provided by Catholic hospitals, especially in the area of beginning-of-life and end-of-life care.[4,5,6] In light of the recent US Supreme Court ruling Dobbs vs. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, these tensions have come to the forefront of public discourse.[7]

The purpose of this immersive learning experience is to learn about these tensions directly from the Catholic hospitals. A small group of six graduate students plus a faculty member interested in healthcare will visit Catholic urban and rural hospitals during Spring Break. Prior to embarking on the trip, the group will meet several times to familiarize themselves with the tension between an individual’s right to all legally permissible medical care and a provider’s religious right to providing care consistent with its moral and social teaching. A set of interview questions will be developed *a priori* to guide the conversations with hospital personnel. Upon returning from the immersive learning experience, the group will meet to prepare a brief report on its learnings with a focus how their future roles in healthcare may evolve because of this experience.

The group will leave Xavier’s campus on Monday of Spring Break and return on Friday. It is expected that the first two hospitals will be rural Catholic hospitals in Indiana and Illinois. The two urban hospitals visited will be in Chicago, Illinois. The faculty instructor will leverage the extensive network of Xavier alumni working in hospital care to set up meetings with hospital executives, ethicists, and clergy at these institutions.

The expected outcome of this immersive learning is a deeper understanding of the tension between an individual’s right to medical care and the provider’s right to provide care consistent with its moral and social teachings. The ability to learn from hospital executives, ethicists, and clergy is expected to educate on a personal level not available in a classroom debate. The personal testimony of the participants will be the primary form of evaluation. If successful, this trip may be repeated on an annual basis.

This experiential immersion trip is consistent with the mission of the University to “educate the whole person,” and with the recently adopted University Strategic and Academic plans’ emphasis on experiential and immersive learning.

**Timeline:**

The immersive learning experience is anticipated to occur over Spring Break in 2024 provided funding is available. The trip will leave on Monday and return on Friday.

**Estimated Budget (assuming 6 students plus instructor):**

* 4 nights hotel x 4 rooms x $250/night = $4000
* 8+ passenger rental van x $150/day = $750
* 700 mile roundtrip / 15 mpg \* $4.00/gal = $200
* Food Allowance $45/day \* 7 people \* 3.67 days = $1150
* Unexpected extras: $400
* Total Estimate: $6,500 or $930/person

**Potential Funding Sources:**

Funding in part or all may be sought from the following sources:

* Center for Mission and Identify
* Women’s of Excellence Grant
* Private Donor

**References:**

1. <https://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/the-strategic-profile.pdf> accessed January 20, 2023.
2. <https://www.usccb.org/about/doctrine/ethical-and-religious-directives/upload/ethical-religious-directives-catholic-health-service-sixth-edition-2016-06.pdf> accessed January 20, 2023.
3. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-catholic-bishops-are-shaping-health-care-in-rural-america/> accessed January 20, 2023.
4. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/reproductive-freedom/religion-and-reproductive-rights/health-care-denied?redirect=healthcaredenied>. Accessed January 20, 2023.
5. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/10/10/abortion-catholic-hospitals-birth-control/>. Accessed January 20, 2023.
6. <https://www.healthcaredive.com/news/catholic-hospitals-abortion-reproductive-care-restrictions/626332/>. Accessed January 20, 2023.
7. <https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/19-1392_6j37.pdf>. Accessed January 20, 2023.