

From Patients to Populations: The Promise, Practice, and Politics of Community Medicine

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Dr. Sejal Patel

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4:00-5:00 pm
Health Sciences Center
Room T-747
Reception to follow

Community-level approaches to health and disease have gained attention among health policy makers, planners, administrators, and providers. With payment models increasingly rewarding health outcomes, healthcare providers have had to grapple with the social determinants that impact the health of their clinical populations. What remains unclear is how providers should incorporate the social determinants into medical practice to make this shift from patients to populations.

Drawing on her book, “The Fat and Happy Town! The Roseto Study and the Promise, Practice, and Politics of Community Medicine,” Dr. Patel describes the emergence of the “risk factor” approach and the challenges of implementing a more community-level orientation to health and disease that resulted from it. In particular, she explores the changing political economy of federally funded research, of academic medical centers, of medical specialization, and of communities themselves and how they impact the viability and success of community-level approaches to health and disease today.

Sejal Patel is a lead health policy and healthcare analyst at the MITRE Corporation. For the past five years, she has supported CMS in modernizing state Medicaid health IT systems to enable healthcare delivery and payment transformation and to better integrate healthcare with behavioral and social services. Patel received her PhD in the History and Sociology of Science from the University of Pennsylvania, with a focus on health research and biomedical science policy. Upon graduating, she was awarded a fellowship with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its Health and Society Scholars Program. Prior to joining MITRE, she served as Senior Research Historian at the National Institutes of Health, where she studied the agency’s influence on health research practices in the United States and abroad. She has written broadly about the influence of the NIH on methods for studying health and disease, including community-level approaches.

charles w. bodemer lecture

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