



GRADUATE STUDIES  
ASSUMPTION COLLEGE

The first **Health Advocacy** master's program in New England to develop a new generation of professionals who help people navigate the healthcare system.

# Health Advocacy *Online Program*



“The Health Advocacy program gave me exactly what I needed to advance.”

– Hannah Bylund, M.A. '15  
Senior Navigator  
Navicare/Fallon Health

“It really was the best of both worlds. I acquired fantastic tools to apply immediately in my current work, as well as high-level expertise to achieve my goal of advancing into Health Advocacy operations management. I can't say enough about the professors, personally and professionally. They are wonderful.

It was a great fit for my hectic life. The program is designed for students who are working full time in healthcare or other fields. Instructors were empathetic about the demands on our lives and did everything they could to help.”



### Assumption College National Recognition

- Recognized as one of the best colleges in the U.S. according to *The Princeton Review* in its annual “Best 380 Colleges” listing.
- Ranked in the top tier of *U.S. News & World Report's* “2016 Best Colleges” ratings of approximately 200 universities in the North that offer bachelor's and master's degrees.

# Launch a Career of Boundless Opportunity.

- MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.) IN HEALTH ADVOCACY
- PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE IN PATIENT ADVOCACY

On behalf of the Health Advocacy program, I welcome you to Assumption College. Our program of study offers a broad-based multi-disciplinary understanding of this burgeoning field, as well as the vital practical expertise that will help you hit the ground running in your new career or enhance your expertise for your current role.

## You'll Benefit from Distinct Assumption Advantages That Help Advance Your Career:

- The program's online format has been designed with working professionals in mind.
- Learn from expert instructors who are seasoned professionals in the healthcare and counseling fields.
- Enjoy personal attention from accessible faculty whose primary mission is to see you succeed in whatever role you pursue within health advocacy.
- The curriculum combines a broad-based understanding of the field with essential practical expertise that can be applied immediately. As such, it is valuable to seasoned healthcare professionals as well as early career healthcare advocates.
- The program aligns with the National Association of Healthcare Advocacy Consultants (NAHAC) standards and best practices.
- It is a singular program: the first Master of Arts in Health Advocacy offered in the region.

As a graduate of the program, you will be fully prepared to take advantage of the diverse opportunities in the wide range of work settings in the field. Students who already have experience in the field will be groomed to move into operations management roles. We wish you happiness and success during this exciting journey.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lea Christo". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

**Lea Christo, LICSW**  
*Director, Graduate Health Advocacy program*  
*Visiting Assistant Professor, Health Advocacy*  
*and School Counseling programs*

# The Master of Arts in Health Advocacy Online

The healthcare system is influenced by many factors, including government legislation, changing economics, healthcare insurance provider plans, and other issues. Healthcare-providing entities are scrambling to make sense of this changing landscape while striving to offer effective and cost-efficient care. Meanwhile, healthcare consumers are confused.

Enter the healthcare advocate.

## Make a difference. Become a trusted voice for patients.

This growing profession makes a real difference by helping patients, families, and providers make efficient use of the system. There are opportunities for professionals from many backgrounds to enter or extend their expertise in the field: recent undergraduates working in a related field, career-changers, and existing healthcare and counseling professionals, both clinical and non-clinical. Settings include hospitals, doctor's offices, nursing homes, clinics, insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, nonprofits, governmental agencies, and private practice.

Most importantly, you'll fill a void where there is a great societal need for thoughtful, inspired and compassionate professionals.

## Gain the knowledge, expertise and habits of mind necessary to pursue this high-impact career.

The curriculum integrates key elements of management, social sciences, human services, and health science through a multifaceted approach that prepares students to become effective professionals. Graduates from the Health Advocacy program will operate from a strengths-based, culturally competent framework that respects and empowers clients/patients and enhances healthcare organizations and the system as a whole.

## You'll acquire vital real-world competencies.

The program equips students to understand, appreciate and demonstrate relevant real-world competency at the personal/patient level as well as the systemic/organizational level: Students develop the skills, knowledge, and competencies to help clients/patients:

- receive healthcare that meets best practices;
- protect their ethical rights in the system;
- receive culturally sensitive healthcare;
- access preventative health services;
- receive appropriate healthcare for their mental health;
- link their healthcare to their communities to access community-based healthcare.

## Enjoy the convenience of an online program.

This program has been developed with the working professional in mind, allowing the flexibility to take classes on a schedule that works with your career and family responsibilities. Students are provided study opportunities that allow them, individually and in groups, to gain knowledge and skills in an area of personal and professional interest.

## Course of study/Full- or Part-time

### 12 Courses/36 Credits

The master's program can be completed in two years, full-time. The first year contains the course of study for the professional certificate program. Students can then opt to return after the first year or later to complete the master's degree in the second year.

## FULL TIME COURSE SEQUENCE

### Year 1

- HAP 505 A Systems Approach to Delivering Health Care in America  
HAP 515 Frameworks for Patient and Policy Advocacy in Health Care  
HAP 525 Critical Issues in Health Care Ethics  
HAP 530 A Strengths Based Approach to supporting Consumers Through the Psychosocial Aspects of Health Care  
HAP 535 Medical Aspects of Chronic Disease and Disability  
OR  
HAP 545 Psychiatric Disabilities and Mental Health System Navigation  
HAP 555 Core Curriculum for Case Management in Health Care

### Year 2

- HAP 600 Management and Supervision for Health Care Professionals  
HAP 610 Research in an Evidence-Based Health Care Environment  
HAP 620 Health Advocacy Practicum and Seminar  
HAP 621 Advanced Health Advocacy Practicum and Seminar  
HAP 630 An Interdisciplinary Approach to Health Policy Analysis  
HAP 631 Evidence-Based Health Advocacy Research Symposium

## PART TIME COURSE SEQUENCE

### Year 1

- HAP 505 A Systems Approach to Delivering Health Care in America  
HAP 515 Frameworks for Patient and Policy Advocacy in Health Care  
HAP 530 A Strengths Based Approach to supporting Consumers Through the Psychosocial Aspects of Health Care  
HAP 535 Medical Aspects of Chronic Disease and Disability  
OR  
HAP 545 Psychiatric Disabilities and Mental Health System Navigation

### Year 2

- HAP 525 Critical Issues in Health Care Ethics  
HAP 555 Core Curriculum for Case Management in Health Care  
HAP 600 Management and Supervision for Health Care Professionals  
HAP 630 An Interdisciplinary Approach to Health Policy Analysis

### Year 3

- HAP 610 Research in an Evidence-Based Health Care Environment  
HAP 620 Health Advocacy Practicum and Seminar  
HAP 621 Advanced Health Advocacy Practicum and Seminar  
HAP 631 Evidence-Based Health Advocacy Research Symposium

# The Professional Certificate in Patient Advocacy Online



The curriculum of the Graduate Certificate program is identical to the first year of study in the Master's program and provides the essential foundation for entry-level work in health advocacy. It is designed for students who already possess a bachelor's degree, and addresses issues of health care ethics, policy, management disease/disabilities and relational dynamics.

## Certificate Course of Study

6 Courses/18 Credits

### Two Semesters Full-Time OR Three Semesters Part-Time

- HAP 505 A Systems Approach to Delivering Health Care in America
- HAP 515 Frameworks for Patient and Policy Advocacy in Health Care
- HAP 525 Critical Issues in Health Care Ethics
- HAP 530 A Strengths Based Approach to supporting Consumers Through the Psychosocial Aspects of Health Care
- HAP 535 Medical Aspects of Chronic Disease and Disability OR
- HAP 545 Psychiatric Disabilities and Mental Health System Navigation
- HAP 555 Core Curriculum for Case Management in Health Care

## Highlights of the Certificate Program:

- **This opportunity** at Assumption College is singular; no comparable programs are currently offered in our region.
- **Online format** meets the flexibility requirements of young adult learners and midcareer professionals.
- **Students in the certificate program** enter a burgeoning line of work in the healthcare field that is an alternative or compliment to hands-on primary care or clinical study, and that leads to employment in a variety of settings including hospitals, doctor's offices, nursing homes, small clinics, insurance companies, businesses, pharmaceutical companies, nonprofits and governmental agencies.
- **Credits earned** in the certificate program may be applied to the Master of Arts program.

## Applying to the Certificate or Master of Arts (M.A.) programs.

You must possess a bachelor's degree to gain admission to any of our Health Advocacy programs. The admissions committee takes a holistic approach to each candidate's application in assessing their potential to successfully complete the graduate health advocacy program. A minimum undergraduate cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better is recommended. Your application file will consist of the following:

- Graduate Application
- Application Fee – *waived for Assumption students and alumni*
- Official College Transcripts, undergraduate and graduate
- Three Letters of Recommendation – *academic and/or professional*
- Current Resume
- A personal essay describing the academic preparation, work experiences, and skills that the candidate brings to this graduate program, what he or she hopes to accomplish academically, and his or her professional goals
- An Admissions interview is required. Video or phone interviews are considered for applicants who do not reside in New England.
- NOTE: The GRE is not required.

# Course Descriptions 2015-2016

## HAP 505 A Systems Approach to Delivering Health Care in America

This course will take a systemic approach to health care delivery in the United States. An overview of health care delivery along with chronicling the evolution of health care delivery in the United States will be covered. The course will provide students with an understanding of the law, the legal system, and the policy-making process as it relates to healthcare. Individual and patient rights in healthcare and public health initiatives will be addressed in addition to public health institutions and systems. Critical policy issues and issues related to specific patient populations such as long-term care, medical technology, government health insurance programs, and health service financing will be addressed in this course. The course will culminate with a critical look at the future of health care and health-care delivery systems. *Credits: 3*

## HAP 515 Frameworks for Patient and Policy Advocacy in Health Care

This course will solidify the role of patient and policy advocacy in the United States health care system. A framework for patient and policy advocacy practice will be covered with an emphasis on tasks, skills and action. The specific skills of patient advocacy will be addressed with a focus on protecting the ethical rights of patients, improving patient quality of life and developing culturally competent advocacy skills. Advocacy knowledge and skills will be emphasized to promote prevention and assist patients to finance health care. Mental health service and community-based care advocacy will be addressed. Policy advocacy in healthcare, community and government settings will be covered. *Credits: 3*

## HAP 525 Critical Issues in Health Care Ethics

This course will address the significant and critical ethical issues evident in current healthcare practice and systems. The course will provide a strong foundation in the principles and theory in healthcare. Healthcare disparities will be addressed with a focus on populations with inadequate access to healthcare. Critical ethical issues related to healthcare will be identified and studied including areas such as physician-assisted death, domestic violence, human cloning and spirituality. Ethical considerations related to older adults such as long-term care and assisted living will be covered. The ethics of healthcare reform will be studied in an effort to look toward the future of healthcare and potential ethical issues. *Credits: 3*

## HAP 530 A Strengths Based Approach to supporting Consumers Through the Psychosocial Aspects of Health Care

This course provides an understanding of the psychosocial issues that are present in the context of healthcare and healthcare delivery. The course will address patient-professional relationships and provide the necessary knowledge and skills for working effectively with patients in the healthcare environment. Students will learn and practice the basic helping skills that support patients' movement through healthcare systems. The course employs developmental and strengths-based frameworks to understand the psychosocial aspects of illness, disability and chronic conditions. Culture and spirituality will be covered as critical components of understanding patients and their healthcare

needs. The significance of cultivating and recognizing support systems will be addressed related to recovery, coping, loss and grief. *Credits: 3*

## HAP 535 Medical Aspects of Chronic Disease and Disability

This course will provide students with an understanding of chronic disease and disability. A review of basic anatomy, physiology and body systems will provide context for studying the characteristics, functional limitations and individual implications that specific disabilities and chronic diseases have on individuals. Students will gain knowledge of medical terminology and medical specialty areas utilized for treatment of disability and chronic disease. A comprehensive overview of health conditions, diseases, disabilities and disorders will be covered. This course will use a person-in-context approach to understand functional abilities and the impact of disease and disability on activities and participation in all aspects of an individual's life. *Credits: 3*

## HAP 545 Psychiatric Disabilities and Mental Health System Navigation

This course will provide an overview of psychiatric disorders using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM 5). In the United States the DSM serves as the universal authority for diagnosing psychiatric disorders and is used to determine payment by healthcare providers. This course will also provide students with an understanding of mental health service delivery systems. Historical trends leading toward community mental health systems will be covered along with the ecological theoretical models on which community mental health services are based. Prevention programs and crisis intervention will be addressed as important components to the community mental health system. Future trends in community mental health services will be covered with specific attention paid to the growing older adult population and behavioral healthcare. *Credits: 3*

## HAP 555 Core Curriculum for Case Management in Health Care

This course will provide the foundational core curriculum for case management in healthcare settings. The history and evolution of case management will be covered to provide a context for the role of the case manager in healthcare settings. The preparation of case managers will be addressed specifying the necessary education, training and certification for effective practice. The case management process will be delineated and studied with attention paid to the role of the case manager in the process. Specific settings for case managers such as palliative care, hospice, acute care, home care and rehabilitation will be covered. Case management for life care planning, workers' compensation, disability and occupational health, disease management, geriatrics and behavioral health will be addressed to provide a comprehensive understanding of case management in healthcare. Legal and ethical issues related to the practice of case management will be covered. *Credits: 3*

## HAP 600 Management and Supervision for Health Care Professionals

This course will provide an overview of basic management functions and the leadership skills necessary for effective healthcare supervision.

Topics covered will span the vast knowledge and skill areas associated with effective healthcare business management and leadership. Management functions such as position descriptions, personnel recruitment, training and orientation, safety and workplace violence, motivation, reward and recognition, and conflict resolution will be covered. Cultural diversity within the workplace will be addressed. Practical management functions such as time management, decision making, effective meetings, delegation and coping with stress and burnout will be covered. The course is a practical and skill-based approach to management within healthcare organizations. *Credits: 3*

### **HAP 610 Research in an Evidence-Based Health Care Environment**

This course is the first part of a two course sequence that will address the translation of research evidence to quality healthcare practices, programs, systems, policies and initiatives. An overview of Evidence-based practice models to understand the process of combining the best available research evidence with knowledge and skill to make effective decisions within the context of healthcare will be covered. The critical appraisal of research as a systematic, unbiased, careful examination of a study to determine its merits, limitations, meaning and value will be emphasized. The course will cover quantitative research, qualitative research, mixed methods research, data analysis and institutional review board procedure. *Credits: 3*

### **HAP 620 Health Advocacy Practicum and Seminar**

This is the first part of a two-part supervised professional field placement experience. Students will complete 100 hours on-site in an approved healthcare setting where they will integrate theory, knowledge and skills learned in the classroom. Students will begin to develop a professional identity as a healthcare advocate and understand the various contexts of advocacy. Students will demonstrate skills, knowledge and attitudes consistent with strengths-based, culturally competent, evidence-based, person-in-context and systems frameworks of practice. Students will attend a weekly group supervision seminar as part of the practicum experience. *Credits: 3*

### **HAP 621 Advanced Health Advocacy Practicum and Seminar**

This is the second part of a two-part supervised professional field placement experience. Students will complete 100 hours on-site in

an approved healthcare setting where they will integrate theory, knowledge and skills learned in the classroom. Students will continue to develop a professional identity as a healthcare advocate and understand the various contexts of advocacy. Students will continue to demonstrate skills, knowledge and attitudes consistent with strengths-based, culturally competent, evidence-based, person-in-context and systems frameworks of practice. Students will attend a weekly group supervision seminar as part of the practicum experience. *Credits: 3*

### **HAP 630 An Interdisciplinary Approach to Health Policy Analysis**

This course will provide an in-depth analysis of healthcare policy. Healthcare policy will be framed from multiple perspectives, specifically economics, political science, management, technology, communications and public health. The policy analysis process will be delineated to provide a framework for critically analyzing and assessing past and current healthcare policy. The policy analysis process will be used to consider health technology assessment, evidence-based medicine, political feasibility, economic feasibility and values. Analysis of past and current healthcare policy will occur along with identifying alternatives for future policy. The course will examine the role and function that healthcare providers and leaders can bring to the policy-making process. *Credits: 3*

### **HAP 631 Evidence-Based Health Advocacy Research Symposium**

This course is the second part of a two course sequence that will address the translation of research evidence to quality healthcare practices, programs, systems, policies and initiatives. Students will develop a healthcare model, initiative, program, system, intervention, legislative initiative or policy utilizing relevant scholarly research and by employing the process of securing research-based evidence to support scholarly practice. Students will identify a problem or need area in healthcare, conduct a literature review, choose a research design, collect data, analyze and utilize data to develop their final project. The course will culminate with students presenting their final projects to faculty, graduate students and selected healthcare professionals. *Credits: 3*

## **College Accreditation**

*Accredited by:*

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary  
& Secondary Education  
Council on Rehabilitation Education

## **College's Mission**

Assumption College, rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition, strives to form graduates known for critical intelligence, thoughtful citizenship and compassionate service. We pursue these ambitious goals through a curriculum grounded in the liberal arts and extending to the domain of professional studies. Enlivened by the Catholic affirmation of the harmony of faith and reason, we aim, by the pursuit of the truth, to transform the minds and hearts of students. Assumption favors diversity and ecumenically welcomes all who share its goals.



"The launching of the health advocacy program fits seamlessly into the mission of Assumption College. The range of competencies and habits of mind that students will acquire through the program are not only in sync with the compassionate service and critical thinking of the College's mission statement; they also embody the spirit of Emmanuel D'Alzon, the founder of the Assumptionists, who read the signs of his own time and sought to promote the common good through the education of competent and dedicated laypeople."

*Fr. Dennis Gallagher, AA  
Vice President for Mission*

“The ideal  
Master’s for  
the non-clinical  
management  
career I’m  
pursuing.”

- Regina White, M.A. '15  
Operations Manager, ABI/MFP Waiver Unit,  
Disability and Community Services  
Commonwealth Medicine/UMass Medical School

“I looked at a number of graduate degrees, including an M.S.W. and M.P.H. Ultimately, this program presented the perfect opportunity to pursue my management ambitions and my deeper passion to help people in need navigate the system.

The opportunities for people who graduate with this degree are truly endless. The health-care field is dynamic and evolving, with careers leading down many roads. Students in the program build broad-based interdisciplinary expertise, taught by expert professionals—an ideal forum for forging your own path.”



GRADUATE STUDIES  
ASSUMPTION COLLEGE

*Light the way.*

[www.assumption.edu/graduate](http://www.assumption.edu/graduate)

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*NOTE: The College reserves the right to withdraw or modify any of the courses or programs listed in this viewbook, or to cancel any course or program for which it deems the registration insufficient, or to make any course or regulation change it considers necessary. The College further reserves the right to suspend the acceptance of applications in particular programs.*