



## Street medicine in Detroit

One weekend in May, some of the residents and I went to Hart Plaza and where I-75 meets Jefferson and met a lot of people needing help.

Hart Plaza was being emptied for a music festival, so at least 100 homeless people are being “evicted” (though it’s technically city property). I’ve been seeing the same people in this space all winter. While we were there today, a few hold-outs were protesting the big exodus, and the police actually came to try to remove them. We even saw a giant dumpster where workers throw out any belongings that were remaining in the space by the “move-out” date. It was so sad; their tents, pillows, sleeping bags and few personal items totally filled this industrial dumpster.

We also tried to help a patient with a horrible hand abscess that ultimately required surgical debridement. We did a roadside I&D on the off-ramp of I-75 and prayed he would allow EMS to take him to DMC, but he didn’t want to lose a day of potential income from sitting by the freeway with his sign, so refused to let us take him. He said “Lunch is the busiest hour.” EMS had already come but since he refused to go in, they couldn’t provide anything else for him so they left. We did our best wound care, draining and wrapping and gave him oral antibiotics. The med student team are going back tomorrow morning to make sure he made his way to the hospital!



*Eleanor King*

Program Director, Family Medicine