



All Things Ignatian



Forming Moral Agents in Health: Linking Health Care with Social Responsibility

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Background and Importance

- Non-physician health professions play a critical role in extending resources to manage chronic conditions, prevent disability and promote health in medically underserved environments.
- In order to diminish disparate care for health, students must first comprehend issues of health care access, limited resources, social justice, oppression and violence, culture and diversity that influence health beliefs and behaviors.
- Transformative learning is critical and involves multiple and repeated exposures to complex issues allowing students to grapple with uncertainty and link emotion with learning. Such experiences may occur with didactic instruction, but are best reinforced with exposure to authentic community contexts beyond the protective boundaries of the classroom
- Most importantly, community-based learning experiences may foster the professional formation of students to include a commitment to addressing societal health needs beyond the care of individual patients. Such skills will be critical to address profound health needs in contemporary practice.
- The purpose of this poster is to describe a constellation of various educational initiatives in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions (SPAHP). The learning experiences are designed to provide students with exposure to authentic community-identified needs to form their identities as professionals who learn to effectively respond to diversity and disparities in health care.



Academic/Community Infrastructure

➤ OISSE, a grassroots collaboration of 40 faculty members representing the professions of Occupational Therapy, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Nursing, Dentistry and Medicine, coordinates interprofessional community outreach initiatives for health professions students. Some of OISSE's community partners include: Omaha Public Schools, Elkhorn Public Schools, Holy Name, Nebraska Safety Council, ARC of Omaha/Ollie Webb, OneWorld, Omaha Metro Stars, Fred Leroy Center, Omaha and Winnebago Tribes of Nebraska, ILAC immersion programs, Presbyterian Outreach, Heart Ministry Center, Salvation Army/ Kroc Center and the Healthy Families Program.

Description of Learning Opportunities

The variety of OISSE-coordinated learning initiatives targeting health disparities and social responsibility may be categorized in the following general areas:

- 1) Health Education and Health Promotion
 - 2) Health Screenings and Service Provision: *pro bono* services, community-based clinics and health fairs customized to community need including: Immunizations, Fall Prevention; Osteoporosis, Developmental Delay; Diabetes, Weight Management and Cardiovascular Risk Reduction
 - 3) Career Exploration/ Workforce Development
- Students may sign up to participate in a "menu" of course based or voluntary opportunities offered across the calendar year

Outcomes (1999-present)

- 2,655 health professions students participated in community initiatives
- 86,026 hours engaged by health professions students
- 54 faculty members have participated in 2,999 hours of service with students
- 21 community partners and over 14,400 community members have participated in the community-based health outreach

A variety of assessments provide evidence of student learning, including: course-based reflections, evaluation of psychomotor skills, focus group data, quantitative scaled assessment, and portfolio exemplars

EXAMPLES OF STUDENT REFLECTIONS:

- "It helped to promote a social consciousness...I may need to take extra steps in building a therapeutic relationship, to address potential barriers of privilege"
- "This experience changed my view of health...so many of the patients we saw had chronic diseases and had been on multiple medications, it helped the team to step back and gain perspective, problem solve feasibility issues and figure out what we needed to do to help"
- "This is important for all healthcare professionals to experience. It makes one realize that money should not be a factor in quality of care and that all people deserve respect and the best care available"

Discussion /Key Points

1. Health disparities are complex and require transformative learning experiences for student sensitivity and skill development
2. Community-engaged learning emphasizes the importance of community/population care skills beyond care of individual patients, including disease prevention and promotion of programs to improve health and respond to disparities in health care - Development of such skills requires deliberate education and cannot be assumed to occur as a "by product" of health professions education
3. Successful strategies require explicit link to the curriculum through learning goals, facilitated learning experiences that are varied and repeated, and measurable learning outcomes and assessment strategies. Recognizing social responsibility in health is an essential part of professional identity for all health care practitioners