

# **SIUE School of Pharmacy students diversify clinical experience in Guatemala**

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August 19 2016 10:39 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - Four students from the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy diversified their clinical experience during a five-week medical mission in Antigua, Guatemala from June 20-July 22, through the School's Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE).

Participants included Class of 2017 PharmD candidates Thomas Kelly, of St. Louis, Decatur's Regan Kitchens, Glen Carbon native Yasmyn Knight, and Janet Ellis, of Latham.

"While in Guatemala, the students worked in rural clinics continually run by Guatemalan clinicians trained in ambulatory care services, community outreach and education," explained Misty Gonzalez, PharmD, clinical associate professor in the Department of Pharmacy Practice at SIUE. "The students helped more than 520 patients in pop-up clinics that we arranged, and in the public health clinics during their time there. The experience also allowed time for exploration of Guatemala, including trips to Lake Atitlán and Tikal."

The students' clinical responsibilities included interdisciplinary ambulatory care treatment, medication selection, dispensing, counseling, health promotion and disease prevention education. In addition to clinical practice, students gained experience in cultural competency, health literacy and health disparities.

"Experiencing healthcare in a poverty-stricken country like Guatemala was an eye-opening experience," said Kelly. "Living in the U.S., we often take access to quality healthcare and medications for granted. The U.S. offers the most cutting edge, top of the line services and diagnostic tests. In Guatemala, patients often only receive the most basic of healthcare in the free clinics."

Now in its second year, the School's Guatemala APPE is a partnership with Saint Louis University School of Medicine physicians, medical students and local Guatemalan healthcare practitioners.

The SIUE School of Pharmacy offers additional global opportunities for students, including experiences in Costa Rica, Jamaica and India. For more information, visit the [School's Global Education Facebook page](#).

**[SIUE School of Pharmacy](#):** Today's pharmacists improve patients' lives through the medication and education they provide. Dedicated to developing a community of caring pharmacists, the SIUE School of Pharmacy curriculum is nationally recognized as a model that offers students a unique combination of classroom education, research, community service and patient care. The School of Pharmacy's areas of excellence

include a drug design and discovery core; pediatric practice; chronic pain research and practice; and diabetes research and practice. As the only downstate Illinois pharmacy doctorate program, the SIUE School of Pharmacy is addressing the growing need for highly trained pharmacists in a rapidly growing field.