

L&C to Initiate Innovative Practice Model at Lewis and Clark Family Health Clinic

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Dean Donna Meyer, of Lewis and Clark Community College, and Dr. Poonam Jain, of Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine, were one of seven interprofessional teams, the only team representing a community college, to recently receive the Oral-Systemic Health Curricular Innovation Development Award.



“As a member of the Institute of Medicine's Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education, it is imperative that approaches for integrated health professional education be included in healthcare curriculums,” Meyer said. “This is a first step with the two academic institutions to partner in the interprofessional educational model. Lewis and Clark has a long standing collaborative relationship with the SIU School of Dental Medicine, and we look forward to this exciting initiative.”

The funds received from this award will help L&C initiate the first step toward an innovative interprofessional collaborative practice (IPCP) model at the Lewis and Clark Family Health Clinic, a nurse managed primary care clinic in collaboration with the Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine, located on L&C's Godfrey campus.

Dr. Jain, professor and director of Community Dentistry at the SIU School of Dental Medicine, said, “Interprofessional education and practice are critical to break the silos that have been created around various healthcare disciplines. As students from various disciplines learn to assess, diagnose, educate and eventually treat patients in interdisciplinary teams, we expect the communication skills of the healthcare team as well as patient care outcomes to improve significantly.”

L&C is the only community college in the nation with a nurse-managed center. The clinic's focus is on health education, prevention and primary care.

The Lewis and Clark Family Health Clinic is managed and staffed by advanced practice nurses and registered nurses. Approximately 200 nursing students rotate through the clinic on an annual basis.

The center has operated successfully for six years, exceeding its projected impact by serving large numbers of individuals in the community. In the past six years, the clinic has had more than 95,000 patient encounters.

The goal of the IPCP is to integrate primary healthcare with a focus on nursing and dental care.

Prevention and health education will be included in the model. This practice approach will not only facilitate and improve care and long-term outcomes for patients, but also expand the scope of practice of each professional group in the model, Meyer said.

The project will exemplify the purposes and functions of nurse-managed centers. The IPCP will be implemented with special attention paid to four principles: values and ethics, roles and responsibilities, communication and team-based practice. Interprofessional healthcare will also be a guiding principle of this project.

The educational aspect of the project will also incorporate the theme of interprofessional collaboration. The core competencies of IPCP, as described by the Interprofessional Educational Collaborative, will be covered in the curricula of L&C's nursing program and that of Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine's predoctoral program, as well as the clinical experiences of dental students, and nursing and graduate nursing students.

A presentation targeting nursing and nurse practitioner students, as well as Year III dental students, is already underway. This presentation uses the Smiles for Life Oral Health Curriculum as a core resource. The presentation is designed to be given to nursing students, nurse practitioner students and Year III dental students at the beginning of their interprofessional rotation.

Nursing students will rotate through the Oral Diagnosis Department of the SIU School of Dental Medicine and interact with dental students and dental faculty. Students from each discipline will observe and assist with patient assessments at each facility.

In the next phase of the project, dental students will rotate through the nurse-managed center at the Lewis and Clark Family Health Clinic and interact with nursing and nurse practitioner students and nursing faculty.

For more information on L&C's dental hygiene and nursing programs, visit www.lc.edu.