What is Interprofessional Education?

Interprofessional Education (IPE) occurs when two or more professionals learn with, from, and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care. The IPE program is available for students in North Dakota who have completed a portion of their health education program. Participants in the IPE program will complete a two week rotation in a rural underserved area and will learn how interprofessional partnerships can enhance medicine in rural North Dakota.

Interprofessional Education

- Encourages communication
- Expands understanding by working with other disciplines
- Promotes respect
- Develops teamwork
- Enhances leadership

What does IPE do for Health care?

- Improves patient safety
- Reduces medical errors
- Enhances communication
- Increases both patient and provider satisfaction
- Controls cost

What does IPE do for Students?

- Increases knowledge of roles, contributions, and expertise among various health care professionals while delivering health care to clients and patients.
- Expands knowledge and understanding of interprofessional collaboration and communication.
- Builds interprofessional relationships and teamwork.
- Prepares students for ongoing and upcoming changes in the way health care is delivered and compensated.
- Shares experiences with other health care professionals.

“The AHEC IPE project I participated in during this rotation showed me that it is possible to work in interprofessional groups in a small town. It also showed me that small towns have a lot to offer in entertainment options, fun for all ages.”

- Nikki Snyder, Pharmacy Student
What is involved in IPE?

• Health care profession students (medical, nursing, dentistry, physical therapy, etc.) are on site for their regular rotation/clerkship/internship/externship, learning together.
• On site health facility coordinator works to bring students together for interprofessional public health projects.
• University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences (UND SMHS) preceptor facilitates IPE activities by teleconference so that the onsite preceptor’s teaching load is not expanded.
• Students evaluate patients and develop plans of care.

Student Perspective

• Integrates patient care activity as part of usual “workflow” for the student on their rotation/clerkship/internship/externship.
• Provides potential for team building and leadership with student led team for these prescribed activities.
• Offers the opportunity for students to work independently and as a team to enhance their usual duties.

Organizational Perspective

• Occupies the time of the student during down times in patient care.
• Offers an opportunity to recruit students to the community.
• Provides facility with a marketable project that encourages students to participate.
• Does not increase workload for onsite faculty – student IPE activity is facilitated through UND SMHS.

Community Perspective

• Provides opportunity for the student to be immersed in the community.
• Increases students’ knowledge about the community and population base.
• Offers students the chance to learn from real life experiences.

Interprofessional Education is important for ensuring quality in health care. The program expects student teams to interact a few hours a week, within the context of their usual rotation/clerkship/internship/externship duties. These IPE team activities are facilitated by a preceptor from the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Dr. Gwen Halaas, Senior Associate Dean, UND, SMHS

“The important thing about interprofessional teams is that the teamwork is visible. That means team members, actively communicating with each other, always include the patient. Ultimately this is about both safety and quality in medicine—it helps to develop very specific communications skills and tools to prevent errors. About 80% of errors in medicine are communication errors.”

Dr. Eric Johnson, Director of IPE, UND, SMHS

“It’s apparent that students enjoy the opportunity to meet, interact, and understand what other students do. These tasks fit in well with the normal student workflow, and enhance learning in a way that helps the patient, their preceptor, the health care facilities, the patient, and the patient’s family. Health care is moving toward these team approaches, we want to see students as leaders in this area.”

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