Hot Spotting  Tricia Olaes

Hot Spotting is the concept of focusing on areas of the community with high healthcare utilization in order to improve health and decrease health-related cost. Earlier this year, VCU was selected as one of ten institutions to pilot a program of interprofessional student teams of hotspotters as part of the 2014 Student Hot Spotting Learning Collaborative. The VCU team consists of five students: two medical students (Eveline Chu and Tricia Olaes), one social work student (Emily Pratt), one nursing student (Andrea Ramos), and one pharmacy student (Aziza Dang).

Together, they follow a five-patient panel of individuals identified as “super-utilizers”, individuals who have been admitted multiple times to VCU Health System. The students partner with the patients to learn about their background and help define health goals. They visit patients in their homes and accompany patients to their provider visits to be a source of support and patient advocate. Throughout the project, they are mentored by leaders such as Jeffery Brenner from the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers and others from Primary Care Progress and the Association of American Medical Colleges. From these experts, the students learn via monthly webinars about the philosophy and structure of the Hot Spotting model, about tools such as the Trauma Informed Care perspective, and about techniques like Motivational Interviewing. This approach allows students to engage in therapeutic relationships with their patients. Additionally, they participate in telephone case conferences to share patient updates with the off-campus mentors and an interdisciplinary team of VCU faculty mentors.

Over time, the students hope to help the patients identify sources of social support, understand their disease processes so they can better self-manage, and navigate the health system better to improve their health. VCU is also leading the evaluation of the ten institution project to assess whether Hot Spotting can be incorporated into the VCU health professions curriculum.

Tricia Olaes is currently a fourth-year medical student in the VCU School of Medicine.
Using Critical Care Simulations to Enhance Interprofessional Collaboration  Joon Ki Choi and Shelly Orr

It is well known that better interprofessional collaboration improves the safety and quality of care delivered to patients. However, collaboration is particularly important with our most tenuous patients—the critically ill. To teach concepts of leadership, communication, mutual support, and situational awareness, which improve competency in interprofessional teamwork for the critically ill, faculty from VCU School of Medicine and the VCU School of Nursing collaborated to develop the Interprofessional Critical Care Simulations (ICCS) program.

All senior nursing and medical students participate in three, two-hour workshops in either the simulation center of the School of Nursing or the School of Medicine. During the first workshop, students are briefed about Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) algorithms, and they work as a team to resuscitate simulated patients. The focus is on team dynamics rather than profession-specific responsibilities. In the second and third workshops, students diagnose and manage simulated patients who experience an acute change in status. They must think critically about the patient’s condition, administer the appropriate care, and escalate to the right source for additional support. Additionally, the teams learn standardized communication tools such as closed loop communication with call-outs and repeat backs. The students debrief as a team with faculty after each simulation to review their interprofessional teamwork. Student feedback has been extremely positive, and the program has been presented in several national forums. A grant stemming from the program is currently under review at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Joon Ki Choi, DO is an internist with VCU Medical Center.
Shelly Orr, RN, BS, MSN is a Clinical Assistant Professor, Dept. of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, VCU School of Nursing.

Richmond Health and Wellness Program

The Richmond Health and Wellness Program is a community-based, care coordination program focused on improving the health of indigent, older adults. The program includes faculty and students from the Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Social Work and the Department of Psychology. These individuals conduct weekly clinics in indigent housing settings across the metro Richmond area. At the clinics, residents of these settings meet with the team of providers to discuss any unmet health needs. The team then works to overcome any barriers to health with the patient and improve well-being.
Improving Health of At-Risk Rural Patients HotSpotting

Leticia Moczygemba

Carilion New River Valley Medical Center, in partnership with Virginia Commonwealth University School of Pharmacy, received a CMS Innovation Center award in 2012 to provide comprehensive medication management and chronic disease state management to improve the health of at-risk rural patients (IHARP) in southwest Virginia. IHARP has been implemented in 6 hospitals, 22 primary care practices, and 20 community pharmacies. Pharmacists who are trained in chronic disease management protocols practice in patient-centered medical home clinics where they identify and resolve medication related problems and provide comprehensive care for patients. As of June 2014, 2,095 patients were enrolled in the project.

The project emphasizes care coordination and shared access to electronic medical records. Over the course of the project, pharmacists have identified 7,114 medication-related problems. Nonadherence, discrepancies in medication lists, and need for additional therapy are the most common problems. Examples of interventions to resolve these problems include discontinuing medications, providing education, adding medications, and increasing dose to achieve therapeutic goals. The estimated cost avoidance of IHARP interventions is $1,844,265. The program will be featured in a panel session at the Third Annual Emswiller Interprofessional Symposium on April 25, 2015.

Spotlight on Leticia R. Moczygemba, PharmD, PhD

Dr. Moczygemba is an Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science, School of Pharmacy, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Her research focuses on working with communities and health-systems to mitigate health disparities by developing patient-centered interventions to optimize medication-related health outcomes. Dr. Moczygemba has worked to advance the health care of homeless individuals, older adults, and those living in rural areas through the development, implementation, and evaluation of care models that integrate pharmacists with health care teams. She uses qualitative and quantitative techniques and quality improvement principles to assess the clinical, economic, and humanistic impact of emerging care models. Her research has been funded by the NIH, CMS Innovation Center, HRSA, United States Pharmacopeia and the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists Foundation.

Through the Center, Dr. Moczygemba is a core faculty member for the Richmond Health and Wellness Program, the Interprofessional Quality and Safety Course, and the Interprofessional Quality Improvement Projects Elective. She has served as the President of the Capital Area Pharmacy Association and as a Director for the Texas Pharmacy Association Academy of Government, Research, and Academia. She was a 2008 United States Pharmacopeia and American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education Fellow. She also received the 2008 University of Texas College of Pharmacy Distinguished Young Alumnus Award. Dr. Moczygemba was a NIH KL2 Scholar from 2010 – 2013 as part of VCU’s Clinical and Translational Science Award. She received her PharmD and PhD from The University of Texas in 2004 and 2008, respectively.
Director’s Message  Alan Dow

Several of the articles in this month’s issue of the Common Thread focus on the care of the underserved. Millions of Americans have difficulty accessing needed healthcare services. The programs featured in this issue are examples of innovative approaches to improve the health of underserved populations. These programs raise important questions about the future of healthcare.

What new ways will health professionals find to provide care and improve health? How will the scope of practice for different health professions evolve in the future? Will the innovative models for the underserved, borne out of necessity, become future models for mainstream healthcare?

The programs featured in this issue may be templates for our future. Discovering which ones offer the most benefit to people and society is one of our goals at the Center. We will continue to innovate, assess, and disseminate in order to do our best to achieve the optimum health of our entire community.

Alan Dow, MD, MSHA, a Macy Faculty Scholar, is the Assistant Vice President for Health Sciences for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Care, and Associate Professor of Internal Medicine, VCU School of Medicine.

Abstract submissions for posters are accepted at ipecenter@vcu.edu through January 23, 2015.