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Individual Commitment to a Group Effort

Pilot study assesses outcomes of teaching health care professionals to work as a team

BY KARA BISHOP | PHOTOS BY NEAL HINKLE

Health care is a team process. Observing the workings of a health care setting with doctors, nurses, physician assistants, etc., it may not be so obvious, but teamwork and communication among these different professionals can be a steep learning curve for new graduates.

“I know on the medical student side, we don’t do a good job of teaching teamwork and communication to our students,” said Saju Joseph, MD, vice chairman and associate professor, School of Medicine Department of Surgery at the Permian Basin. “All of the schools on this campus work as a group, but in class we teach separately. While I understand this from a didactic standpoint of learning, I feel that the faster we incorporate students from different disciplines together, the easier the transition is for the student to become a hospital or clinic employee.”

Joseph took his ideas of incorporating interprofessionalism in the classroom to Sharon Cannon, EdD, RN, regional dean for the School of Nursing at the Permian Basin and Medical Center Hospital Endowed Chair. They developed a pilot study to improve overall communication between pre-licensure health care students from multiple disciplines.

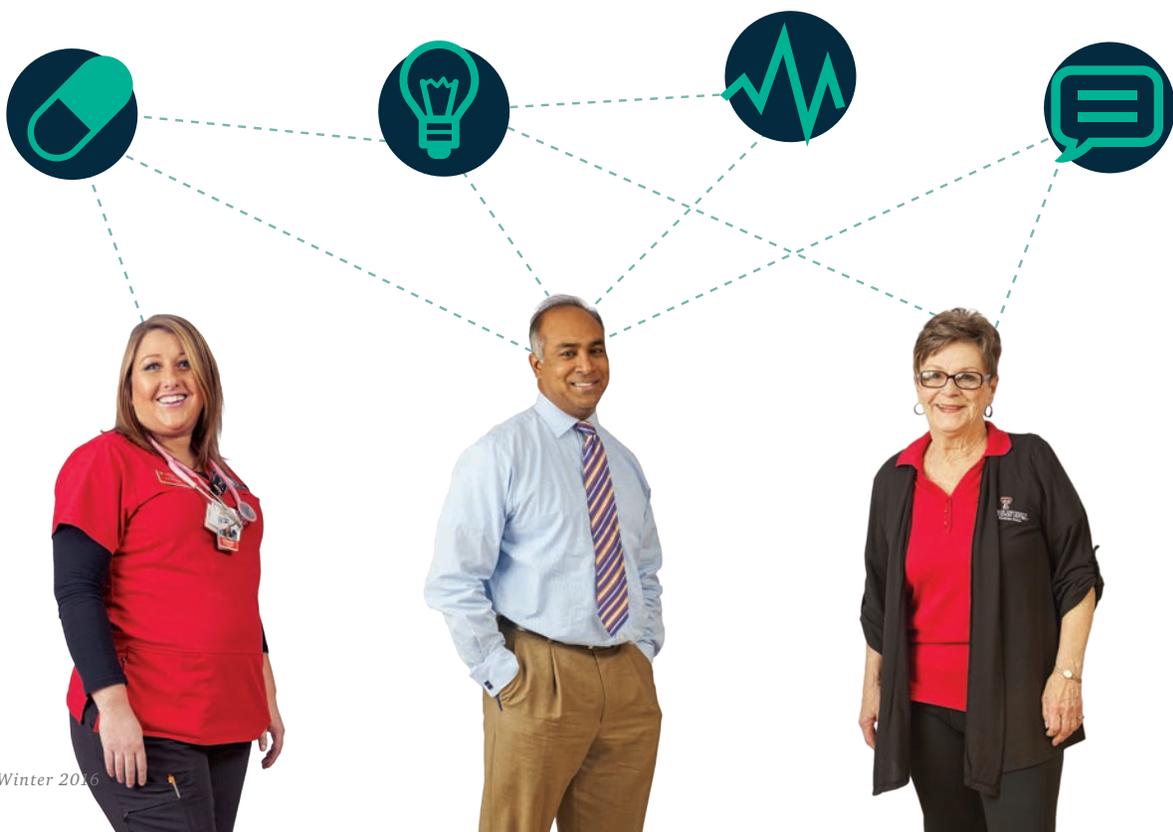
During Phase I of the pilot project, the investigation team collected quantitative data through pre- and post- activity surveys from participants, which included third- and fourth-year medical students and students in the Physician Assistant Studies and Sec-

ond Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs. The initial survey asked eight questions assessing the student’s comfort level when working with interprofessional team members, based on the TEAMSTEPPS model, a system designed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to improve patient safety using communication and teamwork. Students then completed clinical scenarios — trauma, operating room, pre-operative, post-operative — that required clinical skills, problem-solving and clear communication between team members, utilizing the Louise and Clay Wood Simulation Center. The scenarios were recorded and analyzed by programmatic faculty proctors. Following, the participants completed a three question, post-survey, focusing on qualitative responses

PREVENTABLE MEDICAL ERRORS COST THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM APPROXIMATELY \$17 BILLION TO \$29 BILLION PER YEAR. STAFF COMMUNICATION, TEAMWORK AND SYSTEM FAILURES ARE GREATER CONTRIBUTORS TO THESE ERRORS THAN IS POOR INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE.

Source: Chopra et al., 1992, Cooper et al., 1978, Mann et al., 2006 and Ternov and Akelsson, 2005.

Referenced in “A Review of Simulation-Based Interprofessional Education, {italics} Clinical Simulation in Nursing,”{end italics} 2010





THE INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE RECOMMENDED **FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN EDUCATION FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND HAS CALLED FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM TRAINING.**

Greier, A.C. and Knebel, E., 2003

Referenced in "A Review of Simulation-Based Interprofessional Education," *Clinical Simulation in Nursing*, 2010

to assess satisfaction level, benefits of the exercise and the student's willingness to participate in future exercises. Also, the students were allowed an opportunity to provide feedback to their colleagues from the other disciplines as to how each performed.

The faculty recorded videos of the students to get feedback on their experiences, which also proved enlightening, said Diana Goodwin, instructor and retention counselor with the Second Degree bachelor program for the School of Nursing at the Permian Basin.

"One of our nursing students is very soft spoken and doesn't have a lot of confidence," Goodwin said. "In one clinical scenario, she very quietly said, 'I think the patient's coding,' but no one listened to her, and she didn't speak up again and was very hesitant. Turns out she was right in her conclusion and realized that she needed to have more confidence and assertion with her team members."

The project also helped students learn more about themselves and mature professionally, Goodwin said.

"One of our PA students realized, while participating in a clinical scenario involving a difficult family member, that there is always an effective way to approach people. He said that it was important to remember that family members aren't being difficult just to be difficult. They are concerned about their

loved one. He helped himself and his fellow students learn to approach the difficult family member therapeutically from the concern perspective, which effectively diffused the situation and built trust between the patient's family and the health care team."

Trust is one of the desired outcomes from this study, said Cannon.

"The physician who trusts the nurse or the PA and vice versa, will be the team that earns the trust of the patient. The patient will feel properly care for and in good hands, which is one of the reasons that most everyone is in health care to begin with."

This also builds on the commonality held by those who are learning and those who are teaching at TTUHSC, Joseph said.

"Whether you're in medical school, nursing school or health professions, you're a student. Everyone is learning, and students are going through the same stresses and issues regardless of what program or school they are enrolled in. Learning to share in that bond together while in school paves the way for true success in their careers."

There are many goals for the study, say those leading the investigation, but ultimately, they would like to see a change in curriculum that includes direct interprofessionalism instruction.

"The ideal goal is for full implementation of curriculum in about three years on the Permian Basin campus," Cannon said. "After piloting the program on our campus and ironing out all issues, we would like to see it branch it out to other campuses with lead faculty managing the program."

To date, the investigators have made several presentations on their research project, the latest in July at the 26th Sigma Theta Tau International Research Congress. They will also present at the Association of Academic Surgery meeting in February and are working to publish their work as well.

"Eventually this interprofessional curriculum will make a difference," Cannon said. "It's a slow process, and it won't happen overnight, but I think as we continue to take students through this pilot program we have here at the Permian Basin, we will see many positive results." 