

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ABSTRACTS

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Health Education in Rural Areas



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Healthcare in the United States has been on the forefront of people's minds for the last decade. In rural areas of our country this is even more prominent. The cost of healthcare is only a small piece of the puzzle. Rural areas of our country also must worry about access to healthcare, and quality healthcare. It is not uncommon in rural Nebraska for people to travel more than an hour to have access to quality healthcare.

This is something I see everyday from two different perspectives. As the Vice President for Academic Affairs at a small rural community

college in Nebraska, we talk daily about the demands on our programs and students. I am routinely asked about the shortage of nurses in our area and how our college is helping address those needs. The shortage doesn't start or end at nurses. The shortage includes nurse aides, medical technicians, lab assistants, and flows over into other areas of healthcare like dental practices.

The other perspective I have is that of a member of our local hospital board. From that side of the fence I see how our local hospital struggles to staff positions, attract quality physicians to a rural area, and ensure that they are providing quality healthcare services to our region.

Mid-Plains Community College in West Central Nebraska is working in several ways to help meet these shortages and provide quality learning experiences for our students. Below are some of the ways that we are approaching healthcare assistance in our communities.

These stories and excerpts were taken from Mid-Plains Community College. Many thanks to Heather Johnson for her work on authoring these stories.

Volunteering for Quality Dental Care

Dental assisting students at North Platte Community College have been gaining real-world experience by volunteering on a reservation in South Dakota.

"The clinic reached out to us to see if we had any students that could go up there," said Jess Grasmick, dental assisting instructor. "We had one student who went after graduation in the spring, and then Kaytlynn and Paula went up for one day on Sept. 18."



Located on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, the St. Francis Mission Dental Clinic provides dental care to the Lakota people with the help of volunteer dentists and assistants. According to the clinic's website, a recent American Dental Association study found that 90 percent of the

Health Education in Rural Areas

Lakota people on Rosebud Reservation have chronic tooth decay or gum disease. The dental health crisis is the result of living in one of the poorest counties in the U.S. The clinic is trying to remedy the issue by providing services such as dental exams, x-rays, fillings, cleanings, treatments, follow-up checkups and education in preventive care.

“Our students did everything a chair-side assistant would do,” said Grasmick. “They helped with fillings, they disinfected rooms, they entered notes, one sat in on a crown and another assisted with an extraction. It was a great opportunity for them to utilize the skills they’ve been learning about in the classroom in a real-life setting, and it gave them a sneak peek at what they will be doing next semester in clinicals and during the summer in clinical rotations.”

High Fidelity Simulators in Nursing Courses

A new mother and baby will take up residence in the nursing simulation lab at North Platte Community College. The



mother, Victoria® S2220, is the world’s most life-like childbirth simulator. Her baby, Super Tory® S2220, is the first



newborn simulator developed to meet the challenges of neonatal care specialist training in real environments.

Victoria and Super Tory are not the first simulators NPCC has used to train nursing students, but they will make educational scenarios more realistic than ever.

“There are a lot more bells and whistles with this mom, than on the simulators we’ve had in the past,” said Marina Makovicka, nurse educator and chair of the college’s health occupations division. “We can put real OB belts on her, can code and intubate her and her tanks can be filled with different types of mock bodily fluids. She also comes with three bellies, one with a 27-week-old fetus in it, so we can do ultrasounds.”

Another belly can be cut open to give students an up-close look at C-sections. “She has realistic skin that can be stitched up, and then new skin goes on,” Makovicka said. “When you walk in the room, she will look at you - follow you around with her eyes.”



Victoria’s interactive eyes are more than unique — they are game changing. Not only can she track objects, her eyes can also reveal signs of stress, stroke, head trauma, drug use, nerve impairment and many other diseases and conditions. Victoria can be used to simulate early pregnancy complications, high-risk deliveries and postpartum emergencies that students might not otherwise witness during clinicals. She can be converted into a non-pregnant patient if needed and comes with a vascular system so students can practice assessments. Audio streaming capabilities allow nursing instructors to talk through Victoria to the students. Her airway, breathing and circulation are programmable.

Health Education in Rural Areas

Like her mom, Super Tory can blink her eyes. She can cry, grunt with visible mouth movement, extend her arms and legs, go into seizures and convulsions, and her muscle tone is programmable. Super Tory's chest rises and falls as she breathes, and her breakthrough respiratory system accurately responds to mechanical ventilation support like a real newborn.

The introduction of Victoria and Super Tory will allow the college to phase out the original mother, Noel, and baby, Hal, simulators, which have been used for the past seven years. Their life expectancy was five years. These simulators give our nursing students real-life experience and allow our instructors to work with students to improve skills in a safe environment.



Nurse Assistant Courses for High School Students

A partnership between our Broken Bow Campus, Melham Medical Center and Broken Bow High School is helping to train a new generation of nursing assistants in Central Nebraska. The three organizations have banded together to offer a nursing assistant course for Broken Bow High School students. Students have to be at least 16 to participate. Those currently enrolled all plan to pursue a career of some kind in health care, according to Kaci Johnson, MPCC Broken Bow Campus administrator.

The class will prepare them to take a nursing assistant registry exam, and upon successful completion, they will be able to enter the workforce. The five seniors taking the course go to the college campus Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings for classroom and lab instruction before returning to their normal high school classes in the afternoons. Their Tuesday and Thursday mornings are filled with activities applicable to health careers. The actual nursing

assistant classes are being taught by nurses from the hospital's Specialty Clinic. The college is providing the facility and materials.



Emily Fox, one of the students in the class, is going through the program. "I thought it would be good to get some experience before going on to be a nurse," said Fox. "The nursing assistant class has opened my eyes to all the work that goes into the profession. It's more complicated than I expected, but our instructors have been great, and it has been really fun learning all the skills."

Summary

These stories are only a few representations of the partnerships that are being formed in rural Nebraska between educational entities and healthcare agencies. Mid-Plains Community College and Great Plains Health in North Platte are both committed to continuing these efforts to ensure access to quality healthcare in our region.

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