

Better Health Care Via Teamwork

The LSU Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC) is preparing for an accreditation reaffirmation site visit by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) on March 24-26, 2015. As part of this process, SACSCOC, the regional body for accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the 11 southern states, requires institutions to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), a campus-wide course of action to enhance education and student learning.

The LSUHSC QEP focuses on Interprofessional Education (IPE), an initiative for improving the quality of patient care through interprofessional collaboration. With the goal of reducing medical error, improving patient health and the patient experience, and lowering overall costs, IPE trains students to work in teams with providers in other health care disciplines

Through the leadership of Sandra Andrieu, PhD, associate dean for academic affairs, LSUSD has been an early participant in the implementation of IPE. Dr. Andrieu, a member of the LSUHSC QEP Committee, also chairs the LSUHSC Interprofessional Education Committee. Under her guidance and in collaboration with LSUHSC colleagues, the



Students from five LSUHSC schools at the first annual IPE Day

first IPE course to include students from each of the schools of allied health professions, dentistry, medicine, nursing, and public health debuted in 2012 as an LSUHSC-wide elective. The Xavier School of Pharmacy joined the elective in 2013, and in its third term in fall 2014, the course attracted record numbers of students from each school.

In 2009 six national associations of health professions schools formed the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) to promote the advancement of interprofessional learning. With representation from

allopathic and osteopathic medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, and public health, the expert panel identified four core competencies, Values/Ethics, Roles/Responsibilities, Interprofessional Communication, and Teams and Teamwork, to guide curricula development in interprofessional collaborative practice at health professions schools. Dr. Andrieu was one of two IPEC members representing dental education.



Sandra Andrieu, PhD

In addition to the elective course, current IPE activities at LSUHSC include simulation training and case-based learning opportunities. A major goal is to provide structured support to students for IPE through the establishment of a central office and appointment of faculty liaisons from each school. Other goals for IPE include faculty development, additional courses, and formal relationships with clinical sites. Plans are underway to establish an interprofessional primary care clinic at the dental school in cooperation with the schools of medicine and nursing. The clinic will strengthen the IPE program as well as serve as a valuable resource for the residents of New Orleans.

The first annual LSUHSC IPE Day, held on September 24, 2014, drew over 600 first-year students from the various schools who met with faculty members in small discussion groups. Jane Kirschling, PhD, RN, FAAN, dean of the University of Maryland School of Nursing, and director of interprofessional education at the university, delivered the keynote address, "Changing the Course of Health Education." This event emphasized to students the role that IPE has begun to play in the health sciences curriculum of all LSUHSC schools as well as the positive impact of interprofessional practice on patient care.

In "Student Perceptions About Interprofessional Education After an Elective Course," an article appearing in the *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, Dr. Andrieu and her co-authors concluded that IPE courses are an effective method for enhancing student knowledge of the advantages of teamwork across health care disciplines. By teaching our students to work in a team with other health professionals, health care outcomes are improved for patients and communities. We thank Dr. Andrieu for her leadership and initiative in promoting IPE in the curricula at LSUHSC.