This presentation describes the work of a dedicated team of faculty, deans, support staff and community members who have developed and promoted interprofessional education (IPE) at the University of New England’s Westbrook College of Health Professions (UNE/WCHP). The college’s mission is “to train and graduate students in eight health professions to lead, excel, and act as agents of change in an increasingly complex health care system.” Along with their discipline-specific core curricula, students develop interprofessional competencies through a range of integrated educational opportunities. These include co-facilitated and interdepartmental coursework, collaborative clinical site instruction, and extracurricular events that focus on interprofessional communication, health literacy, cultural awareness, and critical self-reflection. Program evaluations thus far indicate that most students experience these learning opportunities as transformative to their understanding of health care practice.

Innovative IPE programs begin at student orientation with a collaborative case study and continue with hallmark college-wide events such as our winter and spring symposia, research days, and interprofessional case conferences. Courses such as The Complex Patient and Social Determinants of Health are open to all students across disciplines. The working group is also developing clinical field sites where interprofessional cohorts of students will be educated together and trained in team-based skills.

Along with designing and orchestrating student learning opportunities, the working group has provided a role model of interprofessional collaboration within and across colleges that has engaged faculty and administration previously skeptical about the benefits of IPE curricula. This success is attributable in large part to an effective working relationship between the faculty task group and administrative support and commitment to the principles of IPE. As to be expected, there continue to be many institutional and attitudinal obstacles to fully integrating IPE at WCHP. The IPE Task Group is committed, however, to take the next steps by expanding and deepening learning opportunities for students, faculty and community partnerships in the next school year.