Developing an Interprofessional Healthcare Simulation Center: An Example of Transforming Systems Through Collaboration

Saturday, March 13, 2010 10:15a.m. to 10:45a.m. 208/209 Hamilton Bldg

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This presentation explores multiple dimensions of transforming an academic health center to support interprofessional collaboration. From a systems perspective, the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center (UNMHSC) has traditionally operated in a strongly compartmentalized manner, with limited interaction between faculty and students in the different colleges and programs. When a new simulation center was recently built on campus, there was a natural opportunity to reconfigure as an integrated, interprofessional educational system.

Faculty members from the College of Nursing, College of Pharmacy and School of Medicine involved in developing what we now call the Interprofessional Healthcare Simulation Center (IHSC) envisioned a place of learning built on collaboration, mutual respect and educational innovation, and developed a strategic plan based on those values. Along the way, we have learned about the different operating modes (educational and administrative) within each college, and explored how to capitalize on each others’ strengths. Our growth as an interprofessional faculty team has led to increased trust and collective willingness to become more assertive and creative.

The administrative, logistical, communication and financial barriers to interprofessional action have been unexpectedly thorny. There are governance questions about who has the authority to make decisions about the building and programs; issues about how to do cross-college budgeting and purchasing of supplies and equipment; the need for better communication patterns within and between colleges; and confusion about how to hire and support staff members who are not clearly housed within one specific college.

The development of the IHSC has forced the UNMHSC to grapple with systems’ change in a deep way. We anticipate that the pioneering work of the IHSC faculty team will have a profound impact on our ability to embark on future collaborative endeavors that extend to a variety of HSC educational, research and service initiatives.