

Health Mentors Program Newsletter

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To Our Health Mentors,

By Deborah Shamilov

Wow! What a semester it has been!

It has been a wonderful experience working yet again with our health mentors and team members. The entire course has been eye opening, and has created a community of individuals who are working together to make the city of Philadelphia a safer and healthier area for its residents.

Students from all health professions have been able to meet each other and work together towards a common goal. We got to meet members of the community and learn what affects their health and wellbeing. We have grown both personally and professionally!

This time around for the M3 Advocacy Project, we actually had the opportunity to make a difference in the community. We got to advocate for our health mentors by reaching out to organizations and community leaders.

There are many lessons and insights that the Y2 students will be taking away from this program, and that the Y1 students will have to look forward to next semester.

Thank you to the course coordinators and health mentors!

Best wishes,

Deborah Shamilov & the HMP Newsletter Editor Team

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Prepare for Winter with These Health Tips

By Benjamin Meyers

Did you know heart attack rates can rise in the winter? Studies from 2010 and 2017 suggest that cold temperatures make the heart work harder and that people shovel too much after being inactive all season. This is especially important for those who smoke or have conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. Rather than never shovel, think about how active you've been and exert yourself at a safe level. A good exercise intensity would be a level at which you are able to talk, but maybe not sing or whistle easily.

Creative "Hacks" for Winter Safety and Health, From the Author

- Cold weather may aggravate chronic pain, although not always in conditions like fibromyalgia, which Margaret Meyer, a Health Mentor has. Find free warm clothes from donation centers like "Our Closet", which sets up in locations like the Lutheran Church at 2111 Sansom Street. "Our Closet" is in Center City, North, South, and West Philadelphia on Mondays, Wednesdays, or Fridays depending on the location. (www.ourclosetpa.org, (267) 256-2179).
- Make wheelchair "snow tires" using zip ties around the wheels. Angle the sharper buckle on the inside of the wheel to avoid scratching yourself later. Test one first to check.
- Ice-pick grips for canes are easy to put on and take off, if you must venture out in slippery conditions. Walmart, for example, sells them for around \$10.
- Water bottles and jugs make cheap weights for indoor exercises like seated jumping jacks or running in place. Need advice? The Global Abilities Foundation specializes in activity for people with physical obstacles (www.globalabilities.org, (215) 205-3076).

Other problems have some workarounds too.

"When it snows, I can't get out," says Meyer, who also has cerebral palsy. She uses a power chair to get around.

Tracey Vause Earland, a Co-Director of the Jefferson Health Mentors Program has some ideas to avoid inactivity and feeling down on the darker, indoor days of winter. "Make a routine to stay active, engage in pleasant activities, and be social. Also, talk to your healthcare provider about flu shots."

Vause Earland has one last, happy thing to remember. "Keep a positive attitude. Spring will be here before you know it!"



Shoveling is great exercise...just don't overdo it.

References:

Auger et al. Association between quantity and duration of snowfall and risk of myocardial infarction. *CMAJ* 2017.

Michelozzi Paola, Sario Manuela De. Temperature changes and the risk of cardiac events. *BMJ* 2010.

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Health Mentor Reflections

By Samantha Burke

Our Health Mentors seem to enjoy the opportunity to help us envision how we can make them part of our healthcare teams. Below are some of our mentors' thoughts about what it means to them to be part of the program:

"The Health Mentors Program has been special to me for quite some time. I had some very uncomfortable interactions with medical professionals as a child growing up with a disability. So often I would think, why don't they understand that I want the same things as everybody else? Since becoming part of the program, I feel like I can give the students the perspective that a disability is only one element in my life and not my entire identity."

- Linda D.



Health Mentors have the opportunity to interact with their team of students and share their stories and experiences.

"I think it's a great program that teaches future health professionals how useful collaboration is. I think it also fosters mutual respect instead of some members of one field feeling superior to members of some of the other fields."

- Anonymous

"I believe the Jefferson Health Mentors Program is one of the finest. It builds a strong foundation for our future medical professionals and gives them special insight into patient care."

- Thomas D.

"Being a part of the Health Mentors Program offers an opportunity for students to see a patient for more than just chronic illness. We are all the sum of our experiences and chronic illness has been a part of my whole life. I was a caregiver for my mother with MS and I was diagnosed with MS in 2007. For me, managing chronic illness extends well past the medical and focusing on my emotional health was a very big part of facing my diagnosis. Having a team of people to keep me healthy is a great strategy. The program offers students the chance to see different perspectives, interact across disciplines and share insight as they move through their studies. I hope they can build lasting connections like this throughout their career."

- Veronica M.

What the students are saying about HMP

By Amanda Ogg

"I believe having the HMP start at the beginning of our curriculum really sets the pace for interprofessional collaboration during our careers. As healthcare providers, it's essential to work cohesively with other medical professionals who have different knowledge, backgrounds, and perspectives than we do. When completing our Health Mentors interview it was very apparent by the various questions asked that we all had different ways of thinking and perceiving an issue. Having more minds with different skill sets will always help you solve a problem from an angle you wouldn't have seen on your own."

- *Mike Hirthler*

Jefferson College of Nursing, Class of 2019

"The Health Mentors Program is one of the best examples and practices of interprofessional collaboration here at Jefferson. The program helps put into perspective all the ways in which the healthcare team works together to support patient needs and health care in general. I've found it rewarding to work with my peers in other disciplines of study and humbling to learn from our team's Health Mentor. The HMP not only enables us to develop an understanding from a patient's perspective, but it allows us as future health care professionals to continue practicing empathy and compassion."

- *Olivia Palmer*

Jefferson College of Nursing, Class of 2019

Upcoming Spring Meetings:

Details for the meetings are included in the letters to the Health Mentors.

For Year One mentors, students will come to your home for the visit (if you are comfortable with this).

For Year Two mentors, your meetings with the students have been completed. HMP Staff will be in touch in late spring to confirm if you are available to sign up to meet with a new team in Fall 2018.

Spread the Word, Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for Health Mentors from all different backgrounds who are at least 18 years of age and are living with a chronic condition or impairment (high blood pressure, asthma, arthritis, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, blindness, etc.) or are a caretaker to someone who is living with a chronic condition or impairment and who enjoys sharing their personal health experiences.

If you know someone who is interested in learning more about the Health Mentors Program, please have them contact Sarah Libros:

Phone: 215-955-4418 Email: HMP@jefferson.edu

Or visit our website to complete an online application: www.jefferson.edu/health-mentor