

# Health Mentors Program Newsletter

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## Warm greetings to start the New Year!

Thank you very much to our volunteer Health Mentors who spent time speaking to our student teams this fall!

During their final meetings, our Year 2 teams spoke about advocacy and our students learned about the process of advocating by creating projects inspired by their mentor's priority.

Our Year 1 teams met on campus for their introductory meeting. Students were able to ask their mentors about their health and wellness history. Meeting 2 will take place this spring and students will talk to their mentor about the influence of the environment on personal wellness.

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"The Health Mentors Program has helped me better understand the concept of interprofessional teamwork and how necessary it is to provide the best care to all patients. Going to our mentor's home as a team allowed us to better gather information about his living conditions and overall lifestyle."

- Romina Albelice, Jefferson College of Nursing

## HMP Newsletter Editors

We have a Guest Editor for this issue! *Rachel Alexander* is currently in a 3+4 Early Acceptance Program in Medicine with LECOM. She serves as a Resident Assistant at the East Falls campus, a lead tutor for chemistry-related subjects, peer tutor for anatomy and biostatistics, and research assistant with Jefferson's Center City campus. In her free time, she enjoys singing, playing the piano, serving her church community, and staying active.

*Stephanie Chin*, FACT-2 Nursing Student, and *Arden Gewirtz*, PharmD candidate, completed their participation in the Health Mentors Program with Module 3 in fall 2019.

# Student Reflections

By Stephanie Chin

A few weeks ago, I said goodbye to the Health Mentors' program as a student, but the valuable lessons I have garnered from this experience will continue to accompany me throughout my future career in nursing. One such lesson taught me the importance of interprofessional collaboration, especially when it concerns the needs of patients with chronic and debilitating conditions. My group, which consisted of medical, pharmacy, and OT students, developed a special bond with our mentor and listened to his concerns regarding his long-standing battle with multiple sclerosis. His resilient attitude towards his condition and his will to stand up for policies regarding disability rights resonated with me and my group and encouraged us to advocate for our mentor's needs. Other students had different experiences with their mentors, but shared similar reflections regarding the program!

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By Arden Gewirtz

The Health Mentors Program wishes everyone a happy and safe start to 2020! As I reflect on my experience in the Health Mentors Program, the irony is my Health Mentor joked that the "Healthy People 2020" campaign seemed so far away back in Fall of 2018 when we sat with her to create goals related to health-related quality of life (HRQOL) and mobile participation in society. I am pleased to write that over the past year and a half, we saw our Health Mentor, a double amputee, with multivariate health concerns and a neurological disease, regain strength and stamina following a protracted hospitalization. She was able to begin attending events at her community center again this year, a SMART goal that was created with our help.

"The experience of working with my health mentor has taught me that a large part of advocacy is listening to what the person needs, not assuming what they might need or want. The discussion we had with her inspired me to want to advocate for more education on chronic illness so that people such as my health mentor do not have to feel as if there is something wrong with them every time they want to do a simple activity." - *Kathryn Barry, Jefferson College of Nursing*

Her current desire is to attend the national amputee conference. She was awarded a scholarship for travel, lodging, and the conference fee, but unfortunately, her home health aide was not. She requires assistance for activities of daily living, and thus could not attend without this ministrations. She expressed to us the value of attending this conference on multiple levels - social, psychological, emotional, and medical and we decided to champion for her attendance as our advocacy project. We have since sent two letters to the National Amputee Coalition on her behalf.

The Health Mentors Program has allowed me to get to know a patient in such a way, as an individual who has goals and dreams, and unfortunately some barriers due to

unforeseen physical ailments. The longitudinal experience of the Health Mentors Program has acquainted me with the knowledge that health and our healthcare system in America still has a long way to go. In the coming decade, it is increasingly important that students believe in the core message of the Health Mentors Program - that interprofessional healthcare practitioners can influence wellness in a personal way. "Healthy People 2030" is not far off - as students, let us hope our future patients can rise to meet the challenge.

## Social media: An educational tool in disguise

By Rachel Alexander

Social media is a powerful tool for change in today's society. Whether it be in campaigning or marketing, the idea of turning ideas into a reality is made possible. Media sharing sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram enable users to disperse information, images, and videos to a broader audience with a single click or share. As social media continues to diversify and cater to audiences of different ages, a topic of interest has become the potential to use social media in medicine.

A study from 2013 evaluated the significant uses of social media in the realm of health communication and identified that it can provide information on a range of conditions, facilitate discussions between patients and providers, reduce stigma, assist in health intervention and education, and answer medically related questions. With search engines readily available for patients to inquire about medically related topics, the presence of a certified provider who references more credible resources could be beneficial. A study from 2010 notes that 43% of bloggers they sampled were physicians. Providers have the ability to interact with colleagues across these media networks and reroute medical "traffic" to more credible sources.

Jefferson Health recently welcomed Dr. Austin Chiang, MD, MPH as the new Chief Medical Social Media Officer. The role of this officer is to bridge the gap between clinicians, students, residents, and the communities whom they serve. A strong digital presence allows individuals to become specific and innovative in care and provide input on trending topics in healthcare. Physicians have expertise in their clinical specialty and can engage in discussions online in a professional manner. Dr. Chiang established a nonprofit known as the Association for Healthcare Social Media to create a space where providers can understand the responsibility and manner to use social media. He describes that being present on social media can help "build a practice, recruit patients for clinical trials, and dispel misconceptions about the field." Several journals and societies can provide real-time updates, and platforms such as Twitter have been used to cultivate academic and professional conversations. Ultimately, social media is powerful in the

spread of information, and community education on health topics can be expanded when providers are challenged to use their platforms to educate and inform the public.

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"The Health Mentors Program gave me the opportunity to interact with students among various fields of healthcare. With healthcare constantly changing, I know this experience will enhance my education and help me in my future endeavors!"

- *Stephanie Cadley, Jefferson College of Pharmacy*

## Tell your friends and neighbors-- we are looking for new volunteer Health Mentors!

### Who can be a Health Mentor?

Adults of any age who:

- have one or more chronic health conditions or impairments (high blood pressure, asthma, arthritis, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, blindness, etc.)
- enjoy interacting with students
- have the availability to meet with a team of students

### What do Health Mentors do?

- Health Mentors will meet with a small group of students 3 times over a year and a half.
- Each meeting will take about an hour.
- Health Mentors share their personal health experiences with the students, with the goal of

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

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