

Health Mentors Newsletter

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Dear Health Mentors,

Happy New Year! I hope you all have enjoyed a happy and healthy holiday. As we head into the new year, our students are looking forward to working with you again and tackling important issues relevant to chronic disease and disability and patient-centered care such as **Access to Care** (for the first year students) and **Patient Safety** (for the second year students). Please see page 2 for a more detailed description of these upcoming Modules.

Also, later this Spring, we will be hosting an end-of-year Health Mentor Celebration/Thank You reception down at Jefferson, so please stay tuned for details on this event. We hope that you continue to enjoy your experience as a Health Mentor and thank you again for your ongoing participation in this program. Best wishes for a great 2009!

Sincerely,
Laurie Collins, MD

Community Voice

“It has been my privilege to have met, as a Health Mentor, with two first and two second year groups of students. It was gratifying to see their enthusiasm and dedication, their interest and their desire to comprehend and relate to the complexities of living with chronic diseases. I believe the program will result in a generation of professionals who will make use of the insight they gained to be more sensitive to the patients they serve.

I am happy to have a part in it.”

- Sarah Frischling, Health Mentor

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We want to hear from you, too! Call or email Jillian Necky at jillian.necky@jefferson.edu or 215-955-3757.

What are Health Mentor Students Doing?:

Module #4 (to be completed by April 20th), For Year 1 Teams

Over the course of the next month, student teams will be working on a case-based project about health insurance and access to care.

Soon, students will be contacting you about their last visit of the year on professionalism. They will ask you about your experiences with the healthcare system and what you look for in a good healthcare provider.

Module #7 (to be completed by March 3rd), For Year 2 Teams

Student teams will be working on a project about patient safety for their Health Mentors. They will identify a safety issue that is pertinent to their Health Mentor, research possible available resources and, as a team, develop a patient safety plan. **Student teams will not be meeting with their Health Mentors for this assignment.**

February is “American Heart Month!!”

By Madhuri Saligrama

Cardiovascular diseases (including heart attack and stroke) are the #1 killer in the United States.

Yes, they are very scary events to think about, but if you learn the signs of a heart attack and what you can do to prevent them, you could save your life!

WARNING SIGNS:

- **Chest discomfort** that lasts for more than a few minutes: pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain
- **Upper body discomfort** in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Other** such as a cold sweat, nausea, light-headedness

Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, **DON'T WAIT to call 911!** Some life-saving medications must be given within one hour of onset, so it's vital that you get emergency care right away.

PREVENTION:

- **Stop Smoking** check out: www.smokefreephilly.org for FREE programs!
- **Lower high blood pressure** by losing weight, becoming more physically active, reducing your salt intake, limiting alcohol, and taking all medication as directed
- **Reduce high cholesterol** with simple lifestyle changes such as eating healthy, physical activity, and taking medication if necessary
- **Aim for a healthy weight**, try one of the many fitness classes offered at an area senior center, some of which are FREE!
- **Be physically active each day** by aiming for 30 minutes of moderate activity. This can be something as simple as taking a brisk walk around your neighborhood
- **Manage diabetes** check out the **American Diabetes Association** at www.diabetes.org or call their Pennsylvania office at (610) 828-5003 or 1-888-DIABETES.

For more heart healthy information visit the American Heart Association's **Heart Hub** at www.hearthub.org

Celebrating our Health Mentors!

By Kanani Titchen

As we jump into 2009, we often resolve to try a new thing, do an old thing better, or just leave a good thing alone. Often we celebrate. The Jefferson Health Mentors Program students celebrate you, our Health Mentors, our teachers, and often our inspiration. In particular, students cite two outstanding characteristics of their mentors: openness and preparedness.

As young adults, we are inspired by our mentors. Medical student Summer Williams describes her health mentor Ms. Tompkins: “She’s open; she’s honest; she represents to us the potential vitality of life that we all hope to maintain as we ourselves age over the years.” As members of a healthcare team, we are brought together by our mentors. Through you, we learn to communicate more effectively with each other and with patients.

Student Julie Shaner (*JMC 2012) explains: “Due to (the) level of comfort that has evolved out of our mentor’s casual and relaxed personality and openness, our group has been able to have free flowing conversation amongst all group members, including our mentor.” Finally, as students, we glean valuable insight from our mentors. Med student Emily Sutton shares that her mentor, Carl, “felt that we could only truly get to know him by having a glimpse into his life. For our second meeting, (Carl) invited us into his home, saying that a doctor could only truly know his patient if he saw the patient’s home. This illustrates how devoted our health mentor is to helping us gain the most from this educational experience.”

Perhaps recognizing that his students are juggling demanding schedules, Mentor Carl is “always prepared.” Continues Emily, “He’s just as excited to help us with our learning as we are to help him. When it came time to review medications with (Carl), he had already prepared a printed list... in addition to having them all out on display for us.”

Other mentors are celebrated by their teams for their mental preparedness. JMC students Michael Share and Brianna Horvath remark that despite some daunting physical injuries and illnesses, their health mentors demonstrate remarkably positive attitudes and, as Brianna puts it, a resilience and willingness to interact with us.” Adds Michael, “(Health Mentor) Dorothy is incredibly positive... She always says she is a “work in progress” and tries to improve her situation every day.”

And we, the students, are also works in progress. Thank you to all of our Health Mentors for your continued commitment to helping us become more devoted and skillful health professionals.

Health Tip

**Yoga is a great way to
relieve chronic pain.**

Yoga can help stretch and
strengthen your body
physically while also reducing
stress and tension.

How to Read Medical News

With all of the new “medical breakthroughs” and “health warnings” coming out each day, how do you know what is true? Here are some helpful tips to keep in mind when reading medical news stories:

- Use common sense – if a story sounds illogical or wrong, don’t trust it.
- Where did the information come from? Was it published in a reputable medical journal?
- Who funded the study? Did they have financial interest in its outcome?
- Does the study report new information, or does it confirm other studies that have already been done?
- Look for a debate about the product or treatment – do they suggest other alternatives? Find out who is for it and who is against it and what their motives are.
- Beware of products that have not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Ask your doctor for his or her opinion.

Source: American Council on Exercise. www.acefitness.org/healthandfitnesstips/default.aspx

Health Mentors Faculty Advisors

Nethra Ankam Rehab Medicine	Dr. Laurie Collins Faculty Course Director	Dr. Marcia Levinson Physical Therapy	Dr. Rob Simmons Public Health
Reena Antony JCIPE	Dr. Kenneth Covellmann Couple & Family Therapy	Jillian Necky JCIPE	Dr. Elena Umland Pharmacy
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Thank you to
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