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Closing the Gap Between Academe and Practice: Creation of an Interprofessional/Interdepartmental Collaborative

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As the world of health care moves increasingly to evidence based practice (EBP) with the attendant benchmarks to demonstrate outcomes challenges emerge both in preparing students to competently practice and in finding ways for currently practicing staff to meet the care outcomes that demonstrate practice based on the best and newest evidence. The first is a challenge for academe while the second is a challenge for the service sector. Research and knowledge mobilization are the keys to addressing the challenges in both sectors. These challenges cannot be addressed by either the academic sector or the practice/service sector in isolation. Only by finding ways to bridge the gap between those two worlds and meaningful solutions be found.

Academic-agency collaboratives in healthcare have been created in the past for several reasons, including promoting recruitment of staff (Chien, Novosad, & Mobbs ; Coxe et al., 2016), improving educational qualifications of staff (Cheshire, Ford, & Daidone, 2017; McKillop et al., 2016), developing the leadership capacity of nurses (Sherman et al., 2013), improving new nursing graduate transition into the workplace (McKillop et al., 2016) and bridging the research-practice gap (Drabble, Lemon, D'Andrade, Donoviel, & Le, 2013). Many of these are profession specific. While there are many examples of academic-agency collaboratives impacting staffing levels, curricula and education of students and staff, there is a dearth of examples of comprehensive inter professional academic-agency collaboratives directly creating innovative new patient programs, particularly in Canada.

The purpose of this presentation is to describe a historic, formal agreement between the Faculty of Health at a Canadian University and an academic health sciences center. The Faculty includes the School of Nursing, the Department of Kinesiology and Health, the department of Health Policy Management and the department of Psychology. The goal of Collaborative is to accelerate the knowledge and practice for promoting mental health locally, nationally and globally. The two organizations have a long history of working together to provide student placements in both undergraduate and graduate programs. However, this agreement goes well beyond the existing arrangements for the benefit of both organizations. By bringing education and service closer together this integrative approach will support the delivery of University Faculty of Health education programs in closer partnership with the practitioners and patients. While many agreements exist to facilitate student education, staff recruitment or research, comprehensive agreements such as this are rare.

The hospital has a history of hosting many undergraduate and graduate nursing students for clinical and research experience, however there are opportunities for developing innovative placements that go beyond what currently exists in a way that benefit students as well as staff and patients at the hospital. The opportunities for collaboration also extend to faculty who can benefit from collaborative research opportunities by tapping into the clinician expertise and accessing patient /family / staff population. At the same time hospital leaders and emergent researchers can benefit from the research and scholarship expertise from the faculty and bring an academic lens to practice projects and initiatives. Bringing experts from the hospital into the classroom can enrich learning for students.

We are a year into the collaborative relationship and are beginning to experience concrete examples of such collaboration through the engagement of nursing faculty in developing a participatory action research (PAR) project on a major nursing initiative and qualitative analysis of existing data collected from patient and family satisfaction surveys. Hospital staff are included on these research teams to support

research capacity development in staff and to bring content and clinical expertise to the projects. Each project has benefits for the faculty member, the staff who are engaged and the hospital with respect to achieving its strategic goals. These projects emerged out of conversations between the university academics and agency health care professionals and discussion are underway on two other projects.

Our early success can be attributed to pre-existing relationships between key individuals at both partner organizations. Our focus on Nursing was opportunistic and we are now actively exploring opportunities for students and faculty from other schools. For example Kinesiology students have traditionally not had placements in this setting; however the hospital wellness center and linking physical activity with physical and mental health offers unique opportunities for engaging faculty and students in a way that could benefit patients, staff, and students. In an environment of limitations in student placements and hospital staffing such initiatives will also serve as examples of innovation and efficiency for the broader system. We also see opportunities for inter-professional education and research initiatives.

The presentation will include a brief description of the key components of the collaborative including the governance and funding structure as well as approaches for engagement at both organizations. We will share details of 1-2 current collaborations in greater detail to illustrate some key success factors and lessons learned to date. We also intend to engage the participants in providing feedback for future directions based on their experiences.

Title:
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References:
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Abstract Summary:
The need for health care disciplines to demonstrate best practices challenges both current practicing professionals and students being prepared for practice. Partnerships, research and knowledge mobilization are keys to addressing these interdisciplinary challenges. This presentation describes one solution to bridging the gap between those two worlds.

Content Outline:

1. Introduction of the problem
2. Review of the literature
3. Introduction of the solution- Description of the agreement between the two organizations
4. Review of goals, activities, resource commitments, oversight, and deliverables
5. Brief description of emerging projects
6. Conclusion

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