

# Paving the way for interprofessional collaboration in health care

By Katie Schrank

Education in Interprofessional Collaboration (IPC) is critical to patient safety. Research indicates that a number of adverse events occur due to a lack of communication between health-care providers every year. IPC education can improve the communication skills of health-care professionals, ideally resulting in better patient outcomes for Ontarians, and all Canadians.

Following the recommendation of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that health-care workers need to work collaboratively on integrated health-care teams for the betterment of patient care, The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences launched an Interprofessional Collaboration Certificate explicitly for health-care professionals.

“Communication is a key competency in a team environment, and when communication skills are lacking the risk of adverse events increases,” says Dr. Ann Russell, Director, Centre for Learning and Innovation, The Michener Institute. “We believe that health-care professionals educated in IPC fundamentals will be even better prepared to care for Ontarians.”

As a post-secondary, diploma and certificate granting institution, The Michener Institute offers a variety of applied health science programs to approximately 1,000 full-time, and 4,000 part-time students. Recognizing the need to improve patient safety and that education was the place to start, Michener set in motion a two part plan to engage in IPC education. First, integrate IPC into the full-time course curricula so Michener students will graduate with IPC competencies. Second, in response to feedback from clinical partners, develop a clinical IPC certificate to meet the education needs of clinical educators. The goal is to have both students, and Michener’s 400 clinical partners educated in IPC competencies.

The IPC certificate enables Michener’s clinical educators to provide students in clinical placements with a continuum of education in interprofessionalism. It provides the tools professionals need to communicate on an integrated health-care team. Some hospitals already have IPC practices in place, and this IPC certificate will only enhance the IPC education health-care professionals already possess.

There are six distinct modules that make up the IPC Certificate. Each module provides participants the opportunity to learn with, from, and about each other to develop interprofessional collaboration and communication competencies. The modules engage participants in experiential learning to build their skills and knowledge of IPC. “The modules are a good blend of theory and activity relevant for the work and home environment alike,” says Sue Crisp, RTNM, RTMR,



A class of Michener clinical coordinators, faculty and staff show off their certificates of attendance for one of the six IPC modules making up Michener’s new IPC Certificate for health-care professionals. Photo credit: Tim Chipman.

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

Module one, Interprofessional Education and Interprofessional Collaboration, examines the philosophy of IPC and how it can be utilized by health-care providers. Module two, Roles, Stereotypes, and Power, encourages learners to understand and recognize the roles of others, the role stereotypes can play in the workplace, and the sources and effects of power on a health-care team.

In the third module, Effective Communication Skills, participants learn about the connection between communication skills and the prevention of adverse events. In the fourth module, Conflict Management, participants identify their personal management style, and practice a six-step plan to identify and manage conflict in the workplace. Team Performance, Module five, explores team phenomena, stages of team development, and the impact of team performance on patient care. Module six, Leadership in Interprofessional Teams, explores the roles of leaders and facilitators in clinical practice and in the advancement of change.

Every module involves group interaction and team based learning to encourage participants to start thinking interprofessionally. Participants share their stories of challenges and triumphs. “I think the course was valuable in hearing other people’s perspectives and perceptions of our roles as health-care providers,” says Laura Smy.

Interprofessional collaboration is an important part of increasing the safety of Ontarians by limiting the number of adverse events that occur every year. The IPC modules offered at Michener can go a long way in improving health care professionals’ interprofessional competencies, and will ideally result in improved patient care and safety.

Michener’s Centre for Continuing

Professional Education offers this unique IPC Certificate open to health-care professionals across Canada.

For more information on the IPC Certificate visit [www.michener.ca/ce/ipc.ph](http://www.michener.ca/ce/ipc.ph).

*Katie Schrank is a Communications Associate at The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences.*