

Paving the way for improved patient care



Tim Chipman photos

Students in the Interprofessional Collaboration certificate program work together to solve a common health-care dilemma that can occur when the proper communication skills are not used.

QUICK FACTS

The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences has graduated more than 85,000 health-care professionals in such fields as radiation therapy, medical laboratory science, nuclear medicine technology and magnetic resonance imaging.

Its new Interprofessional Collaboration (IPC) certificate builds on health-care professionals' existing knowledge and skills while further enhancing IPC in the health-care setting. The program consists of six modules (four-hour workshops) delivered by a team of health professionals and educators. Learn more at www.michener.ca.

Students listen intently and make notes during one of the six modules of the Interprofessional Collaboration certificate program.

LINDA WHITE, SPECIAL TO SUN MEDIA – A new certificate program launched by the Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences is based on an important principle: when health-care professionals share their knowledge and skills, the quality of patient care improves.

The Interprofessional Collaboration (IPC) certificate program is part of Michener's two-part plan to engage in IPC education. First, it integrated IPC into full-time courses following a Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care recommendation that health-care workers work collaboratively on integrated health-care teams for the betterment of patient care.

In doing so, its graduates are prepared to work collaboratively on integrated health-care teams. "IPC is really starting to get very big in hospitals," says Shelley Bond, manager of primary and critical care for continuing education. "Once students started taking it to clinical sites, (clinical educators) started to see its benefits."

In response to feedback from clinical partners, Michener developed the IPC certificate to meet the education needs of its clinical educators. "Our clinical sites needed something to fill the gap to accommodate students with IPC training," says Don Bartlett, portfolio manager for clinical education relations.

The certificate program is being well received by health-care professionals and educators alike. One of the modules, for example, encourages learners to understand and recognize the role stereotypes can play in the workplace. Another explores stages of team development and the impact of team performance on patient care.

In her job as a cytotechnologist in anatomical pathology at Gamma-Dynacare Medical Laboratories, Agnes Kurek studies cell specimens to detect cancer.

She's also a clinical co-ordinator with Michener's diagnostic cytology program.

Even after working in health care for the past decade, Kurek admits she didn't always understand the role of other health-care professionals. Completing the IPC certificate has helped her appreciate their perspectives.

"We tend to work in silos ... and almost forget that we all have a common goal, which is the health of patients," she says. "This program helps us see that goal. You also get to meet other professionals, which is helpful."

"This program helps get rid of assumptions and stereotypes."

— Sandi Ellis

Sandi Ellis, a professional leader/clinical co-ordinator in respiratory therapy at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto, agrees. She works on an advisory committee of non-nursing health disciplines, which includes physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers and pharmacists.

"We work together to oversee our constituents' education, research and quality," Ellis says. "You work in a hospital with other health-care professionals, but it's surprising how little you know about them unless you seek it out."

Since completing the IPC certificate, Ellis has begun chairing an interprofessional education and collaboration committee. "This program helps get rid of assumptions and stereotypes," she says. "You learn about them, from them and with them. That's the cornerstone of interprofessional collaboration."

linda.white@rogers.com

