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Inter-Professional Education Preparing Healthcare Learners for an Aging Society

Abstract:

In recent years, educational institutions present a picture of Inter-professional Education (IPE) for health professionals at the undergraduate level (pre-licensure level) as a panacea for effective, continued Inter-professional Collaboration (IPC) in all sectors of the health care system. In a complex system where multiple professionals must practice collaboratively to provide the best possible care to clients, it is essential that these professionals be educated in a way that encourages integration of the concepts of teamwork, integration and collaboration across professional programs. IPE programs vary across educational settings from an individual course to a one day seminar among health professionals with no integration of social and community providers and limited opportunities for practice. This is particularly evident in the homecare and community sector and more specifically in the care of older adults with chronic multiple conditions.

Population aging is a powerful and transforming demographic force. The world's population is ageing, and virtually every country in the world is experiencing growth in the number and proportion of older persons in their population. Population ageing, the increasing share of older persons in the population, is poised to become one of the most significant social transformations of the twenty-first century, with implications for nearly all sectors of society, including labor and financial markets, the demand for goods and services, such as housing, transportation and social protection, as well as family structures and intergenerational ties. As populations become increasingly aged, it has become increasingly apparent that solutions to our health and health care challenges for aging population require a collaborative teamwork approach that is interdisciplinary and inter-professional.

Today's healthcare labor force is being asked to work in collaborative, integrated teams to achieve the goal of delivering patient-centered, safe and effective care that meets the growing and complex needs of an aging population. A vision for collaborative practice fueled by inter-professional education has emerged on a national level, and momentum is building in academic and practice settings in support of this vision. In order to sustain this momentum and make inter-professional collaborative practice a reality, healthcare leaders and educators must critically evaluate the cultures, systems and infrastructures currently in place. Healthcare organizations also must understand that collaboration is more than just working together and working well with others outside the traditional care circle. It is also a commitment to a new operational framework and an acknowledgment that an integrated healthcare workforce will need innovative tools, resources and technology that can stand up to and promote the demands of team-based care delivery today.

This presentation will share an inter-professional education course on smart aging. This course is designed to accelerate innovation to improve the lives of older adults. It emphasizes design thinking process that starts from discovering the hidden needs in daily life to developing the technical solutions with business possibilities. The members participating in this course include

professors from different universities with different specialties, companies in manufacturing, retailing, long-term care facilities, and students from different universities and different disciplines. These courses have cultivated more than 1000 young talents with the ability to develop products for smart aging.