

Celebrating Interprofessional Education at St. Joseph's Health Centre, Toronto

From October 27th to 31st, St. Joseph's Health Centre, Toronto, is celebrating Interprofessional Education Week, a yearly event which trumpets our groundbreaking and industry-leading interprofessional learning and collaboration.

This special insert helps to explain what interprofessional education is and how we put it into practice at St. Joseph's. It also shares experiences first-hand from some of the many professionals that make up the face of interprofessional care you and your family will receive at St. Joseph's Health Centre.

At St. Joe's, interprofessional collaboration is a priority. By learning together, we shape the way we practice as teams. Different disciplines are encouraged to break down barriers by sharing knowledge and expertise so that we can effectively "Put Our Patients First".

"We know that no single person working in isolation can provide comprehensive and holistic care. As a result, from the time they start at the organization we educate new staff together, so that they get to know each other's unique roles and scopes of

practice," said Elizabeth McLaney, Manager of Interprofessional Education.

Diverse professionals such as doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists, occupational therapists and social workers all learn and collaborate together to achieve the same goal: The best possible patient care.

Among the many events planned for Interprofessional Education Week includes our Interprofessional Skills Fair where our staff are encouraged to learn about each other while practicing or refreshing some of their skills.

Changing the way we educate health providers is key to ensuring that health providers have the necessary knowledge and training to work effectively on interprofessional teams within the evolving health care system.

Most exciting of all, you can watch it unfold on Breakfast Television on Tuesday, October 28th. You may even learn a thing or two! For more information check us out at www.stjoe.on.ca.

Interprofessional Education - the Highlight of Jeff's Career

Jeff Dionne is fully immersed in education at St. Joseph's Health Centre. As Clinical Co-ordinator for Respiratory Therapy, Jeff has acted as the primary preceptor and educator for RT students for three and a half years. In addition he also educates nursing students, Intensive Care Unit residents and physiotherapists. Needless to say, Jeff takes interprofessional education very seriously.

"We're working to create a more streamlined environment where we can learn with, from, and about each other," he said. As if that wasn't enough, Jeff was also one of the initial coaches with the Interprofessional Practice project last year, facilitating workshops for the Health Centre's Point-of-Care Teams. "It was groundbreaking for a Respiratory Therapist to be part of this exciting initiative," he said.

He firmly believes educating others about what scopes of practice different professions possess in the Health Centre enables an environment of optimal care. And for that, he's grateful to be at St. Joseph's Health Centre.

"We are the leaders in interprofessional practice and education. We're one of the frontrunners in the creation of lived examples for interprofessional collaboration, due in large part to the tremendous support from senior leadership."



For Jeff, the positive outcomes of Interprofessional Practice and Education are many:

"The greatest benefit is that all aspects of patient care are addressed and, for staff, it fosters an environment of mutual trust and respect," he said. "And, for me, as a Respiratory Therapist, being involved in interprofessional education has been a highlight of my career so far."



A Sense of Community in a Community Teaching Hospital

When he was first recruited from the U.K. in 2001, it was St. Joseph's Health Centre's quest to be the Best Community Teaching Hospital that appealed to Clint Gunn the most. The Education Coordinator stayed for a few years in the role of a Clinical Care Leader and then an Advanced Practice Nurse before, although he loved it, leaving to pursue another opportunity. He just couldn't stay away.

"I came back in February because St. Joe's, as a learning community, fit me. People are always willing to give you time," he said. Clint loves the spirit of interprofessional practice and education that permeates every aspect of the Health Centre. He's been involved in both for awhile and was thrilled when he was selected as a coach, a role he relishes.

"We often work in silos, but at St. Joseph's, I can see a sense of community and there's a real advantage to taking the time to get to know people," said Clint. This advantage is a real benefit to the entire Health Centre.

"By working together, we're using resources wisely. Also, people are more engaged. We know and understand each other," he said. This makes St. Joe's a great place to work and, for Clint, was worth coming back for.

What does Interprofessional Practice Mean for our Patients?

Improved Patient Experience is the Outcome

Teamwork is crucial to the success of a community hospital. In that spirit, Point-of-Care Teams at St. Joseph's have been taking part in interprofessional practice workshops, where staff from a wide range of disciplines are encouraged to use their own experiences and diversity to solve problems together.

This strategy has the direct result of a more improved patient experience and is in line with our philosophy of valuing patients above all else. "We've had a lot of feedback that St. Joseph's has taken a leadership role in interprofessional practice. I've had calls from across the country about what we're doing," said Keith Adamson, Manager, Interprofessional Practice.

Our patients are a direct part of their care planning. Effective teamwork can improve the quality of patient care, enhance patient safety, and reduce workload issues that cause burnout among health care professionals.

Transferring Interprofessional Practice to the Front Lines

St. Joseph's Health Centre has received one of only 10 grants from HealthForceOntario to pilot an interprofessional respiratory care team.

The Assertive Interprofessional Respiratory (AIR) team, which consists of a Registered Respiratory Therapist, a Registered Pharmacist and a Registered Nurse, began training and learning collaboratively on October 2nd, 2008. Starting in January, the team will be posted in the Emergency Department for six months, weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Very few Emergency Departments in Toronto have Respiratory Therapists as a core member of the team. By sharing their unique professional knowledge on the AIR team, each member will be able to work to their full scope of practice, with the outcome of improving wait times and time to treatment for patients with respiratory conditions.

Following the pilot, the project team will assess the trial and create a planning and implementation toolkit to support others who aim to implement interprofessional teams within their organizations.



Seeing the Benefit of Interprofessionalism Every Day in Paediatrics at St. Joseph's Health Centre

For Dr. Eddy Lau, Chief of Paediatrics at St. Joseph's Health Centre, interprofessional practice means that everyone involved in the care of a child gets to share their perspective in that child's treatment.

"Everyone gets to put their two cents in and it becomes automatic. We can reconcile all of our different perspectives," said Dr. Lau.

He is pleased to see that St. Joseph's Health Centre is taking some initiative in ensuring that's happening and getting staff involved in interprofessional practice and education. He concedes, though, that "it takes time."

Dr. Lau is a trained coach for interprofessional practice and enjoys the responsibility of encouraging Point-of-Care Teams to be inclusive of all members.

"As a coach, I'm trying to help each member of the Point-of-Care Team to work better as a team," he said. At work, he sees the benefits of interprofessionalism every day.

In paediatrics, he gets to work, and collaborate with, dietitians, child life specialists, social workers, nurses, nurse managers and educators, respiratory therapists and anaesthetists, among others.

"For example, we might see a child admitted for possible infection who requires blood work. I'll discuss the situation with a nurse and, if they need tests, we may get Child Life Services involved. We could potentially even get a social worker involved, depending on the situation," he said.