Access and Prevention for the Poor and Underserved: A Community Health Initiative
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http://www.lemoyne.edu/UNDERGRADUATE/Nursing/

ABSTRACT:
In 2007 the Le Moyne College Department of Nursing was approached by the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception in Syracuse, NY to join an initiative to provide interim primary health care services to the poor and homeless of downtown Syracuse. This initiative, Amaus Health Services at Cathedral opened in July of 2007 under the medical direction of Dr. Lynn-Beth Satterly. This opportunity for nursing students to perform credit bearing clinical activity in a free clinic was not available in the Syracuse area prior to this collaboration.

Inclusion of Le Moyne College nursing students in the program became a part of several of the courses leading to the BS degree in nursing, most notably the Community Health Nursing course (NSG 440). Students have developed projects at Amaus for health promotion service learning initiatives (incorporated into the community health course and other courses) which have become annual events. These projects include injection training; a program in which nursing students teach first and second year medical students from a local medical university to give injections so that these medical students can in turn volunteer their services at flu clinics at Amaus, under the supervision of their nursing student teachers; and the annual foot care clinic in which students from local colleges in health curricula collect shoes, socks, and foot hygiene items, along with books, toys, and clothing to be distributed at the annual clinic. During the foot clinic event, the Le Moyne students provide foot soaks, inspection, treatment of minor foot problems, and referral to the client population who would otherwise have no opportunity for this level of preventative care. In addition, Amaus has become a location for student projects at the graduate level.

The experiences offered at Amaus provide the students with opportunities to assess access to care issues and their consequences, identify the health care needs of the underserved and underinsured population of this Central New York Community, and develop, initiate and evaluate health promotion activites with the Amaus patient population as the target audience.

EDUCATIONAL METHODS OR APPROACHES USED:
The student and faculty experience at Amaus is utilized in multiple courses and as credit bearing clinical placement (in community health and leadership courses) and as a site for a required service learning project. Students placed at Amaus engage in active clinical practice with their faculty and other providers and participate in inter-professional conferences at the start and end of clinical days. Any student group present is welcome to participate and in general these groups include nursing, medical, physical assistant, and public health students. The experience is brought into the classroom by asking students to utilize their Amaus experience to discuss issues of poverty, homelessness, lack of insurance, lack of access, and bias in both undergraduate and graduate-level courses.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
The focus of this initiative is to provide undergraduate nursing students with the opportunity to experience the problems of access to health care and the importance of primary prevention and health promotion through involvement in a free clinic for the un/under insured. Involvement in the project has been incorporated into several nursing courses most notably Community Health Nursing. The goal of initiating and sustaining this relationship with Amaus is to expose students to the realities of lack of health care access due to lack of insurance, inadequate providers to serve the community in general and
the uninsured or Medicaid dependant in particular, and other constraints of providing quality health care. In addition, the Amaus experience allows students to view health promotion efforts from a different social lens by developing initiatives to meet the needs of the area’s poorest (financially and health) citizens. This initiative also addresses some of the areas in the 2010 Institute of Medicine Report, the Future of Nursing, by taking the student outside of the acute care setting to apply skills of assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of health promotion efforts in the underserved community. This project has assisted in addressing both the College and Jesuit missions of service by allowing students service related to health care while discovering the health problems in the local area and in the US while applying classroom theory regarding determinants of health, access, and vulnerability to the local population.

In the undergraduate course in Community Health Nursing and in the Health Promotion and Protection Course (NSG 375*) students have also developed 2 notable projects for health promotion service learning initiatives which have become annual events. These projects are injection training class and the annual foot care clinic.

The injection training class is a course offered every fall to first and second year medical students interested in volunteering at Amaus. Because nursing curricula provide intensive lab based skill teaching and competency in medication preparation and administration, the senior level nursing student at Le Moyne, (all NY State licensed RNs; students in Le Moyne’s undergraduate program are either in the RN-BS program or are enrolled in a dual degree partnership with St. Joseph’s College of Nursing, an Associate in Applied Science in Nursing program, so are eligible to sit for the licensure examination after their third year ) develop a two-hour course to be conducted at Amaus teaching these skills. The course is developed under the direction of nursing faculty and a graduate student in the nurse educator track at Le Moyne. Participation in this session provides the medical students with appropriate theoretical information on medication administration skills and opportunities to practice with saline and injection pads under the direction of a senior level nursing student. Following this initial training session, the medical student participants volunteer for one of two scheduled flu clinics at Amaus teaching these skills. This program has been in place since the fall of 2007 and has been very well attended by the medical students. These students have also completed evaluations and have been highly satisfied with the program and the quality of education offered by the nursing student instructors. The experience also allows the nursing students to gain increased experience educating other health professionals and providing health education to the public, both expectations of the baccalaureate nursing curriculum.

The second significant program involving students at Amaus is the annual foot care clinic. This program gives the nursing students the opportunity to not only engage in interprofessional learning and collaboration, it brings together students from three local colleges enrolled in a variety of health programs (medicine, public health, nursing) to address a need that is not often discussed when prioritizing the needs of the underserved: footcare.

This project, initiated by a concern of the rector of the Cathedral that the poor and homeless in Syracuse spent a great deal of time outside in the harsh winters for which Syracuse is famous, with footwear that is inadequate to protect from the elements. Offered the week before Thanksgiving each year, this program challenges each college group to engage their campus in the project through the collection of socks, shoes, items for foot hygiene, and other items (books, toys, and clothing) to be distributed at the annual clinic. During the operation of the foot clinic the Le Moyne students and the local medical students provide foot soaks, inspection, treatment of minor foot problems, and referral if necessary. The
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Clinic has volunteer physicians that serve as the first line of referral for those with foot health problems identified by the students. During the assessment and treatment, students engage the patients in conversation about their general health which often leads to teachable moments on topics such as substance use/abuse, sexual health and nutrition.

The Amaus foot care clinic is a highly anticipated event each fall semester. Calls are received from local church groups and shelters as soon as the term begins requesting the date of the event so that referrals can be made and religious education classes and other service groups can get involved. Beginning in 2008 (the clinic was held in January the first time, but moved to November in the fall of 2008), the number of individuals served by this event has grown from 40 to nearly 70 during the 4 hour period in 2010.

The nursing program at Le Moyne College opened in fall of 2004 as an RN-BS program. This has grown into a program offering a Dual Degree (Associate in Applied Science in Nursing and BS in nursing in four years) in partnership with Saint Joseph's College of Nursing in Syracuse, and MS degree with a nurse educator and nurse administrator tracks. As a relatively new nursing program, partnership with Amaus Health Services at Cathedral has afforded numerous options to enhance curriculum in the Community Health Nursing Course (NSG 440) taken in the final semester of undergraduate work. This site was also incorporated into a stand alone course in Health Promotion and Protection (NSG 375). However, this course has been recently discontinued and the content integrated into courses in Family Health (NSG 420), Leadership (NSG 410), and Community Health. This change in curriculum allows for prevention and population health to be a threaded theme in several undergraduate courses.

As noted in the project description, The Department of Nursing at Le Moyne College collaborates with students from Upstate Medical University's Amaus Club and Syracuse University's Wellness Program students in these efforts. Collaboration with the Le Moyne Department of Physician Assistant Studies occurs on other projects involving Amaus.

HEALTHY PEOPLE OBJECTIVE ADDRESSED:

This case study most notably addresses the Healthy People 2020 objective ECBP-12-16: Increase the inclusion of core clinical prevention and population health content in health professions education. However, the projects within the curriculum specifically address the Healthy People 2020 objective regarding Access to Health Services. By inviting the vulnerable population into the clinic for foot inspection and care, this population that is often suspicious of efforts to help by those in "authority" is introduced to health care in a non-threatening environment. The screening that occurs often uncovers problems that could be easily treated, but the individual was unaware of the existence of this tiny clinic and their ability to receive care in a respectful environment. Entry into the Amaus system also increases the potential for the uninsured to secure health coverage through the referral to a volunteer social worker to assist with this process. Participants in the foot clinic may receive follow-up care at Amaus, thus establishing a relationship with a primary provider. Secondly, the injection training addresses the objective of Immunization and Infectious Diseases (IID-12: Increase the proportion of children and adults who are vaccinated annually against seasonal influenza). By training medical students to administer injections and extending this training to the Amaus flu clinics, the number of individuals in this high risk population who receive the annual flu vaccine can be increased. This may not only reduce the number of flu cases in the county, but the serious complications of the infection as well.

PROGRAM OR COURSE GOALS:

Number of students enrolled/participating in 2010-2011 school year: 17
No separate course was developed; however, the opportunity to integrate content and clinical experiences related to clinical prevention and population health has been integrated through a number of courses throughout the curriculum.

Did you conduct a needs assessment as part of your planning process?  
☐ Yes  ☒ No

PROFESSIONS INVOLVED:
Faculty: Barbara M. Carranti and Kara Keyes (Department of Nursing, Le Moyne College) and Susan Scholl (Internship Coordinator, Wellness Program, College of Human Ecology, Syracuse University). Six Le Moyne College nursing undergraduate students; ten Upstate Medical University second year medical students; and one Syracuse University College of Human Ecology (Public Health, undergraduate student) were on site for the events this past year. It should be noted that students from all three of the campuses became involved in collection of socks, shoes, clothing, and items needed for foot hygiene on their campuses and from local vendors during each fall semester that these programs have run. In addition to the faculty members noted, the Flu clinics and the foot clinic are overseen by Lynn-Beth Satterly, MD, medical director at Amaus Health Services at Cathedral, Syracuse, N.Y. It should also be noted that Religious Education students from Holy Cross Church in Dewitt, NY (a neighbor of Le Moyne College) also get involved in the annual foot care clinic by assembling foot care bags containing new socks and foot care items for each participant. The students are under the direction of their teacher Tiffany A. Koszalka, PhD, Faculty in the School of Education at Syracuse University and Amaus board member.

LESSONS LEARNED/EVALUATION RESULTS:
Since partnering with Cathedral in Amaus Health Services the value of these experiences for students has been immense and in many ways immeasurable. In their early education nursing students are socialized to the role of the nurse in acute care and focus their energy on treatment and cure, or medical model. The partnership with Amaus allows students the opportunity to expand their views in a number of ways. Students are able to see the critical role of nursing in prevention and healthy lifestyle education. Although admittedly, this is introduced in early nursing education, the focus on disease process and treatment, coupled with short hospital stays makes focus on prevention a secondary priority. Students also can evaluate the Healthy People goals, objectives, and initiatives in a real-life setting, rather than simply reading them in a text.

The recently released Institute of Medicine Report on "The Future of Nursing" (http://iom.edu/Reports/2010/The-Future-of-Nursing-Leading-Change-Advancing-Health.aspx) and The Quality and Safety Nursing Education Initiative (http://www.qsen.org/definition.php?id=2) focus the attention of the nursing profession and the nation on the key role of nurses in quality health care and access to this care for the underserved. It is also noted that the nurse of the 21st century must be skilled at interprofessional collaboration. With the projects noted, students from multiple colleges and health care disciplines are given the opportunity to work together on initiatives that enhance access and prevention for the underserved. Anecdotally, students share that their experience at Amaus improves their relationships when they encounter each other in clinical settings, having established relationships of trust and collegiality during their Amaus experience.

It is also noted that after spending time at Amaus for an academic or service learning experience, students often ask to remain at Amaus for additional hours or return to Amaus as volunteers following graduation, thus meeting the Jesuit mission of service of Le Moyne as well as the educational mission of Amaus to foster student interest and desire to continue to work with this population throughout their health care career, thus enhancing the ability of the local community to increase access.
CONCLUSION:
To implement a similar initiative it is strongly recommended that faculty identify sites which will allow faculty practice as well as student placement so that the classroom can be extended into the community. Also work with sites to allow students freedom to develop health promotion initiatives within the clinical site. It is also critical to the success of any initiative implemented in a setting such as Amaus that operates with an all volunteer staff, that partnerships with local providers be developed for the purposes of referral. Many providers in the area have stated a desire to assist, but inability to devote time during traditional hours of office operation. These providers can be helpful by agreeing to see patients on referral, offering consultation to staff, or recommending other sources for information and education of patients and providers. It is of added value to the educational experience to incorporate students from multiple professional disciplines. The experience of learning the role of other professionals and opening communication between groups fosters collegial relationships which will serve the students well as they move into professional life.

Adding to the success of these initiatives is the integration of the programs into the local community. Repetition of health promotion programming allows the community to become familiar with the initiative and plan to refer those in need. In particular, the foot care clinic has become an expectation of the churches, shelters, and aid centers in the downtown Syracuse area. This helps the students in soliciting donations, fosters a feeling of carrying on a tradition, and encourages participation throughout the curriculum and across campuses.

It is also important for success of these health promotion initiatives to use the clinic as an opportunity to introduce professional concepts into the curriculum in all nursing courses offered at the undergraduate level. Many of these students have only experienced nursing in the acute care setting. Incorporation of this unique health care setting excites students about nursing in the community, allows opportunities to work with other area college students to address national health issues on a local level and helps to make these prevention programs a success year after year.

COMPANION MATERIALS: (Course syllabi, resource lists, tests, website, etc.)
The course description for NSG 440 Community Health can be found at the link below. This is an undergraduate capstone course which includes a clinical and service learning component. Amaus Health Services at Cathedral serves as a site for student clinical as well as the injection teaching program and Foot Care Clinic. https://fs7.formsite.com//APTR/files/f-115-190-6088112_mkiqX8YX_NSG_440_description_and_objectives_and_Amaus_projects.docx

Nursing 375 Course description, objectives and service learning guidelines

PUBLICATIONS:

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