Health Educators, Foundations Announce Competencies and Action Strategies for Interprofessional Education

Washington, D.C., May 10, 2011—Two new reports released today by six national health professions associations and three private foundations recommend new competencies for interprofessional education in the health professions, and action strategies to implement them in institutions across the country. By establishing these competencies, the proponents believe our nation’s health care system can be transformed to provide collaborative, high-quality, and cost-effective care to better serve every patient.

The first report, *Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice*, was produced by an expert panel convened in 2009 by the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC), a unique partnership of six associations—the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, the American Dental Education Association, the Association of American Medical Colleges, and the Association of Schools of Public Health. Interprofessional education, as defined by the World Health Organization, involves shared learning among students from two or more health professions.

The panel was charged with identifying individual-level core interprofessional competencies for future health professionals. It proposed four domains of core competencies needed to provide integrated, high-quality care to patients within the nation’s current, evolving health care system. It also identified 38 specific subcompetencies that describe the essential behaviors across the four domains. Overall, the panel recommends that future health professionals be able to:

- Assert values and ethics of interprofessional practice by placing the interests, dignity, and respect of patients at the center of health care delivery, and embracing the cultural diversity and differences of health care teams.
- Leverage the unique roles and responsibilities of interprofessional partners to appropriately assess and address the health care needs of patients and populations served.

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- Communicate with patients, families, communities, and other health professionals in support of a team approach to preventing disease and disability, maintaining health, and treating disease.

- Perform effectively in various team roles to deliver patient/population-centered care that is safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable.

The second report, *Team-Based Competencies, Building a Shared Foundation for Education and Clinical Practice*, was the result of a conference, sponsored by the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the ABIM Foundation in partnership with IPEC. The meeting, held in February 2011, brought together more than 80 leaders from various health professions to preview the core competencies presented by IPEC, and create action strategies that would use them to “transform health professional education and health care delivery in the United States.”

Conference participants developed the following action strategies to implement the IPEC core competencies and move to a system of educating health professionals to work collaboratively:

1) Communicate and disseminate the core competencies to key stakeholders—academic deans, policymakers, and health care leaders—and launch an education campaign that makes the critical link between collaborative health care teams and providing high-quality, safe, and cost-sensitive treatment.

2) Prepare faculty for teaching students how to work effectively as part of a team and encourage all health professions to use the competencies in their fields.

3) Develop metrics for interprofessional education and collaborative care to help advance team-based competencies in teaching and practice.

4) Forge partnerships among the academic community, health care providers, and government agencies to advance interprofessional education.

The Interprofessional Education Collaborative and the foundations believe that establishing these core competencies for health professionals will provide the valuable transformative direction needed to improve the nation’s health care system.

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