

Seagrave Receives HRSA Award for Team-Oriented Patient-Centered Medical Education

By Jen Nachbur

An innovative University of Vermont-developed family medicine training curriculum has earned a five-year, \$945,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration. Led by Martha Seagrave, PA-C, R.N., assistant professor and director of medical student education in the department of family medicine, the project is designed to inspire and prepare future family physicians to provide patient-centered and team-oriented medical care in rural and underserved communities. The project launched October 1, 2011.

Called TOPMED – Team-Oriented, Patient-Centered Medical Education – this new curriculum progressively introduces medical students to the concepts, language, and integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes central to the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) concept. Key components are enhanced by the expansion of the family medicine clerkship to six weeks in length, which allows students more opportunities to apply what they have learned into practice, and promotes students’ career interest in primary care for the underserved.

What makes TOPMED unique is its goal to place 50 percent of medical students in the family medicine clerkship in medically underserved communities, rather than at the more traditional academic health center training locations. In addition, TOPMED will capitalize on Vermont’s Blueprint for Health model to educate and train medical students in high-quality, cost-effective, team-based health care. The program boasts improved opportunities to expand public health curricula and projects connecting practice to communities.

To gauge TOPMED’s impact, Seagrave and colleagues will conduct longitudinal tracking of interest and effectiveness of activities, pre-TOPMED and post-TOPMED knowledge and attitude evaluations, multiple choice questionnaires, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), quality of PCMH projects, number of students choosing primary care, and number of students in practice in medically-underserved communities.

“Family physicians provide essential patient advocacy and coordination in an increasingly complex medical system,” says Seagrave. “I am excited about this opportunity to link our innovative educational program to the Vermont Blueprint for Health, and ensure our graduates possess the tools and skills they will need to work confidently, effectively and competently in the emerging Patient Centered Medical Home.”

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