LETTERS

An Innovative Way to Provide Student Pharmacists With Interprofessional Education

To the Editor. Although Jones and colleagues do an exceptional job describing the importance of interprofessional education in student pharmacists' curriculum, they also outline that the use of introductory pharmacy practice experiences (IPPEs) to accomplish this education may not always be feasible because of a lack of resources.¹ As a recent graduate from a school of pharmacy that lacks interprofessional facilities and personnel on campus, I can share my positive experience with its collaborative approach to overcoming these obstacles.

Working closely with members from area higher education schools, my university helped to form and became a part of the Northeastern/Central Pennsylvania Interprofessional Education Coalition (IPEC).² The regional model, as outlined by Olenick and colleagues, offers an excellent experience. In 2011, the IPEC summit hosted over 500 students from 17 different healthcare professional institutions and programs. As a student pharmacist, I experienced the IPEC summit twice, once as an attendee and again the following year as a facilitator. The summit is successful at covering the core competencies outlined by the Interprofessional Education Collaborative Expert Panel.³

My school, Wilkes University, has found that using this program works best for its students and faculty members to provide a strong foundation of interprofessional

education. Currently, it is required for all student pharmacists in their third year to attend the annual summit. For my university, using an IPPE model would be a difficult task because of some of the barriers outlined by Jones and colleagues.¹ This collaborative approach allows Wilkes University to overcome these obstacles to prepare student pharmacists for interprofessional teamwork for their entire careers.

Interprofessional education should be a cornerstone for all students in a healthcare profession. As colleges and schools of pharmacy look for better ways to implement this into their curriculum, barriers to inclusion of interprofessional education in IPPEs should not be a hindrance to a great experience. Using the unique resources available to each institution can lead to a successful program that not only benefits student pharmacists, but also many other students from various healthcare professions.

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REFERENCES

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