

Diversity Service Learning Opportunities Change Student Perspectives And Reap Benefits for Patients As Well

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As part of the P2 experiential curriculum, students must dedicate 40-42 hours to a site that serves a diverse population. These sites, several of which are free clinics, provide health related services to the under-served community in the Des Moines area. Through these experiences students have the opportunity to build skills in drug therapy problem-solving, communications, product and service management and exemplify professionalism. One student this year had a particularly measurable impact on his patient by utilizing his communication and problem-solving skills. Jedidiah Bartlett, a P2 student at Drake completed his diversity experience at Bethel Mission. Bethel Mission is part of Hope Ministries, a local organization that provides food and medical care for all, and provides living



Jedidiah was assigned to assist patients in filling out their health history forms. Noticing a particular patient was having difficulty filling out the form. Jedidiah decided to help by asking additional open-ended questions to clarify answers. He began the interview by asking the patient, “What is the purpose of your visit today?” To Jedidiah’s surprise the patient replied, “It hurts to pee.” Jedidiah was surprised at the man’s frankness and quickly realized that this patient interaction was to be different than any he experienced in the classroom. As they progressed through the form, the patient had stated that he had a family history of high blood pressure. The patient confessed that he was always too afraid to get his blood pressure checked, concerned that poor results might indicate heart disease. The patient went further to describe some surprising and alarming symptoms and signs of angina including numbness in his left arm that followed up to his neck, chest pain and fatigue after exertion, and episodes of headaches and blurred vision. Jedidiah notified the nurse practitioner and technician of the presented symptoms and measured the patient’s blood pressure at 150/100 mmHg.

Medical Care Sought

The Bethel Mission staff took immediate action by taking the patient to the hospital. “He was very upset that he would not be able to start his new job due to the possibility of surgery, let alone admit to himself that he now had a heart problem,” Jedidiah said. “I truly felt for his situation.” The patient ended up having surgery that included the placement of three stents in his heart. Upon returning to Bethel Mission for a follow-up, the

patient showed great appreciation for the Bethel Mission staff and Jedidiah for identifying his illness. The patient also proudly announced that he felt “better than he had in a long time.” They measured his blood pressure at 122/84 mmHg which was a significant improvement. Looking back on the situation Jedidiah stated, “I really feel like I caught something that could have seriously put this man’s life in jeopardy and this is a refreshing reminder of why I am pursuing pharmacy as my career.”

Making a Difference

By applying the skills of patient assessment and health history interviews, Drake pharmacy students are making a difference in the Des Moines area. Pharmacists and pharmacy students have the medical knowledge to catch drug interactions and identify risk factors for disease and therefore should apply these skills to real life situations. When asked about what he learned from this experience, Jedidiah responded by saying, “I learned that when questions are asked with more depth, it could potentially save time, money and improve the health of patients and I hope to apply these skills that I learned at Drake University in my profession.”