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Veteran's Administration National Center for Patient Safety Comes to Philadelphia

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Veteran's Administration National Center for Patient Safety Comes to Philadelphia

Thomas Jefferson University made a strong showing when the National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS), a project from the Veteran's Administration (VA), made its recent stop in Philadelphia in April. The NCPS, headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, has the goal of applying human factor analysis and safety research from other industries, such as aviation, to identify and eliminate system vulnerabilities. The NCPS conducts training seminars across the country. Dr. John Gosbee and Dr. Edward Dunn, both from NCPS, led the seminar. The attendance of three members of the Dean's office, Dr. David Paskin, Dean for Graduate Medical Education, Dr. Cynthia Silber, Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education and Dr. Karen Novielli, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, highlights Jefferson's commitment to improving patient safety education. Three members of the Department of Health Policy, Dr. David Nash, Dr. Christopher Sciamanna, and Barbara Bozarth attended as well.

The train the trainer program provides attendees with an understanding of how to teach "patient safety." The program offers examples for reaching varied audiences, including medical students, residents, and attending physicians. The program emphasizes innovative and effective methods for teaching patient safety, given the experiences of NCPS over the past decade. Themes of the seminar include: 1) replacing the culture of blame with a culture of safety, 2) performing root cause analyses that involve all members of the healthcare team, especially front line members such as residents and staff nurses, 3) focusing on and minimizing system vulnerabilities, rather than "human error".

The program is part of a movement to improve patient safety across the nation. It is quite clear that much work remains to be done and there is little evidence of progress in reducing errors. This is despite requirements from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) to report serious adverse events, and requirements from states, including Pennsylvania, to report adverse events. Given the competition for the time of trainees and faculty members, the program includes information on "Selling Patient Safety Curriculum - To Peers and Leaders", which highlights the reasons for incorporating patient safety into the healthcare curricula.

For example, three of the core competencies outlined by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), 1) practice-based learning and improvement, 2) professionalism and 3) systems-based practice, can be achieved, in part, by incorporating patient safety elements into the medical curriculum. Any organization that is interested in improving patient safety, and training the next generation of physician leaders to tackle the problem, should strongly consider the NCPS training program as a good place to start.

For more information on the NCPS visit: <http://www.va.gov/ncps>.

About the Author

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