

Creating Our Future Leaders

AMSA 2nd Annual Patient Safety and Quality Leadership Institute

January 8-10, 2010

The Jefferson School of Population Health (JSPH) hosted the American Medical Student Association (AMSA) Second Annual Patient Safety and Quality Leadership Institute (PSQLI) in Philadelphia the weekend of January 8-10, 2010. The PSQLI worked to create a focus on quality improvement, teamwork, and communication skills and to foster a sense of urgency toward improving safety and quality nationwide.

Students from the University of Illinois-Chicago College of Medicine, Drexel College of Medicine, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and Jefferson Medical College attended this year's Institute. According to Boris Rozenfeld, one of the program organizers, the goal of the conference was to "educate and expose our members to issues of quality and safety in its infancy, and to teach the necessary skills that would allow AMSA leaders to become more involved in this emerging field."

David B. Nash, MD, MBA, Dean of JSPH, opened the weekend by introducing Michael J. Vergare, MD, Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at Thomas Jefferson University, who discussed the emerging issues with regard to safety and quality and the effect on healthcare professionals. Dr. Nash followed these remarks with a discussion about the importance of knowledge about safety and quality and how it will have a profound impact on healthcare in the coming years.

Other featured speakers included: Neil Goldfarb, Associate Dean for Research, JSPH; Ralph Halpern, MSW, Director, Content Development and Program Evaluation, Tufts Care Institute; Peter Katsufakis, MD, MBA, Associate Vice President, National Board of Medical Examiners; Valerie Pracilio, Project Manager for Quality Improvement, JSPH; Susan DesHarnais, PhD, MPH, Program Director, Health Care Quality and Safety, JSPH; Lee Ann Riesenberg, PhD, RN, Director, Medical Education Research, Christiana Care Health System; and Peter Fleischut, MD and Adam Evans, MD, MBA, both from New York Presbyterian Hospital – Weill Cornell Medical College. Topics covered included: Measuring and Improving Quality in Outpatient Care; Faculty Development and Curricular Needs; Licensing and Maintenance of Skills; How to Get Engaged in Quality and Patient Safety; Studying Errors and Processes; and Methods of Analyzing Quality and Safety Problems.

Students learned about the basic organizational structure of the hospital and the key members of the hospital staff involved in safety and quality. For example, Dr. Fleischut and Dr. Evans, both anesthesia residents at Weill Cornell Medical Center, described several initiatives that they have implemented at Cornell that significantly improved patient safety during their residency. For example, Dr. Fleischut and Dr. Evans collaborated with administrative staff to create an electronic notification that prohibits order

entry until a medical reconciliation form is created. Since the initiative was started, Dr. Fleischut and Dr. Evans reported that there was an incredible increase in compliance, from 40% to 99%.

Another issue described in depth, was the difficulty of defining exactly what safety and quality means. Dr. DesHarnais provided a detailed description on what it means to measure safety and quality and what exactly defines an 'outcome measure'. Dr. DesHarnais also provided an explanation of risk adjustment and why it is considered so crucial to include when measuring safety and quality, particularly in underserved populations. Mr. Rozenfeld noted that the conference attendees also learned "that [we] need to move away from simply clinical research to more qualitative research; to do this, we are learning how to understand abstract details currently understood by few in the healthcare field." Mr. Rozenfeld then described how students are often unaware of ways in which different disciplines can work together to improve patient safety and quality, and how speakers like Dr. Riesenberg have broadened the attendees' knowledge about other specialties and their efforts to improve safety and quality.

Institute participants were also treated to a tour of the University Skills Center and Simulation Center by Drs. Dale and Kate Berg, and a panel discussion on work-life balance issues.

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TOP row (from left to right): Todd Rubin, Marcia V. Wilkof, Susan DesHarnais, Kate C. Blenner, Lee Ann Riesenberg, David B. Nash, Louisa Baxter, Marina V. Zeltser, Catalina Morales, Mary d'Alelio, Minda Aguhob, Ben Goold, Isabel Lazo, Aimee Williams, Zach Landau

BOTTOM row (from left to right): Nida Dygesis, Gregory Azzam, Justin Abraham, Pankaj Kaushal, Joshua Weinstock, Rohit Tonk, David Pierce, Boris Rozenfeld, David Rand

On January 19th, the students involved in the institute participated in a webinar hosted by Dan Henderson, another one of the student leaders in AMSA. Along with Mr. Rozenfeld, Mr. Henderson presented different techniques on how to approach and sell the idea. Mr. Henderson reminded students that one of the hardest parts about increasing safety and quality is creating awareness and a sense of urgency, and focused his discussion on ways for students to seek out appropriate faculty champions to help them advance the causes of safety and quality in each member's institution. ■

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