

Health Policy Forums

Addressing Population Health Through Interdisciplinary Collaborations

Tim Gibbs

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The Fall season of the Health Policy Forum opened up with a presentation by Tim Gibbs, Executive Director of the Delaware Academy of Medicine, a private, non-profit organization that has been in existence for over 80 years. Mr. Gibbs has provided direct service delivery and technical assistance for Delaware nonprofits throughout his career.

The Delaware Academy of Medicine is an important partner in promoting professional and lay health education, and is the major resource for health information in Delaware. The Academy shares an extensive merged medical library with Christiana Care Health System, including consumer health libraries (the Gail P. Gill Consumer Health Library and Delaware Health Source) throughout the state. The consumer health library program is operated in collaboration with the Delaware Division of Libraries. The Academy also offers a number of professional and student educational activities. In addition to these initiatives, the Academy promotes a strong digital presence via *Go Local Delaware*, a free online database for consumers designed to provide numerous listings of health services and programs throughout Delaware.

Mr. Gibbs is particularly passionate about the Academy's various innovative multi-stakeholder

initiatives. The "Delaware Mini Medical School" is a lecture series for high school students and students of all ages, with content that focuses on important trends in medicine and in health. Participants receive a certificate of achievement for attending the lecture series. Past topics have included: sleep; pain management; asthma; weight loss; and antibiotic resistance.

"Heart Truth Delaware" is another collaborative initiative of the Academy that targets primary care providers in an effort to improve clinical processes for the prevention, assessment, and treatment of cardiovascular disease for women in Delaware. Through education, training and communication regarding services and events, this program also aims to strengthen the referral process.

Mr. Gibbs discussed the "Top Ten Series," a monthly regional conference that educates physicians on evidence-based updates in a variety of specialty with the goal of improving the standard of practice for primary care physicians and specialists.

The Academy oversees the Hospice and Palliative Care Network of Delaware, a collaborative designed to improve access to quality end-of-life care by identifying barriers to care and working to overcome

them. The network has a strong educational component for professionals and consumers.

Mr. Gibbs also described the Academy's financial aid program for physicians and dentists. In existence for almost 50 years, the program was established to promote the study of medicine and dentistry. Nearly 1200 students have received more than \$1.7 million in loans.

Mr. Gibbs emphasized the importance of real and effective partnerships as the avenue for achieving successful programs and improving services. Some of the organizations the Academy currently partners with include: Christiana Care Health System; The New York Academy of Medicine; Winterthur; The College of Physicians of Philadelphia; Nemours; Medical Society of Delaware; and the University of Delaware. ■

For more information on the programs of the Delaware Academy of Medicine visit:
<http://www.delamed.org/index.shtm>