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Developing Health Care Quality and Patient Safety Linchpins Through Interprofessional Education

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In contrast, health professions education is mostly protected from the turbulence that our clinical partners are experiencing, and remains relatively insular and isolated. In the 2003 IOM report, *Health Professions Education, A Bridge to Quality* proposed a set of five core competencies that should serve as overarching educational goals for all health professions education, curricular integration and dedicated patient safety education continues to be a rare component within health care education. Additionally, most faculty have modest experience in improvement work and most often those who excel in the science and scholarship of quality improvement have largely been motivated by individual professional interests. Consequently, preparation of new health professionals expert in quality and safety has lagged behind the development of those in clinical practice, creating a gap for entry into practice.

The days are fading when health professions education can focus solely on the development of individual practitioners able to deliver quality care within their designated discipline. The emerging paradigm is for students to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes to understand and value the perspectives and responsibilities of others, as related to improving systems that affect their ability to provide that care, together. To promote learning, academic institutions and their associated clinical facilities must encourage and invite interdisciplinary groups of students to participate in workplace-based experiences to learn about quality, patient safety and systems improvement. Concurrently, health professions teachers must harness the curiosity, energy and passion of those embarking on their health care careers, and help them become linchpins - indispensable health care professionals, working together, who can invent, connect, create and make things happen, to realize the vision of a health care system free of patient harm.
References