



Meet an IPE Student Champion from Thomas Jefferson University Zachary Semenetz, MD Student, Class of 2019

Briefly describe your work with/related to JCIPE

I helped this past spring, through the Jefferson Geriatrics Department, with a program called Alzheimer's Virtual Interprofessional Training (AVIT). We used a virtual world called "Second Life" to simulate an interprofessional approach to a clinical encounter for a patient with dementia. We simulated the roles of a patient, caregiver, pharmacist, and physician with my fellow students from the medicine, pharmacy and physical therapy programs.

While not part of JCIPE, I also was a member of the first executive board of the Future Health Professionals Program, a diversity initiative and pipeline program geared toward educating high school students about all of the healthcare professions.

What excites you about this work?

It is exciting to be a part of IPE as I can foresee it being a strong component of medical education in the future. My hope is that IPE is the wave of the future and will be a part of health professional schools across the country.

What have you learned that was new?

As a medical student, I think we often get the idea in our heads that we have to be the most knowledgeable individuals in all aspects of medicine. However, from working with pharmacy, nursing, and PT students, I have found that they truly are experts in their fields and we should rely on each other's expertise in order to best serve our patients.

Why is IPE/CP important to you?

IPE/CP are important to me because my career will depend on collaboration with other professionals. Every healthcare professional is required to work with individuals in different fields in order to do their job properly. If students are not exposed to other professionals until they are already working in the hospital, the learning curve will be much steeper. In fact, without IPE we can never expect to attain the cooperative level necessary to best serve our patient populations. I think we still have many improvements to make in how nurses, doctors, medical assistants, physical therapists, pharmacists, and other staff/faculty work together in the hospital and clinical setting. In order to make this change, we need to start with interprofessional education as early as possible to make collaborative practice the norm.

How do you think you will apply your IPE/CP learning to your future role?

I hope that I will be able to better understand the roles that my fellow healthcare professionals fill. When I order a PT/OT consult for a patient, I want to work with the therapists to understand the needs of the patient. If I submit an order through the EMR, I want to know what the nursing staff will see on their end and what that intervention looks like when applied to the patient. I can be more efficient and prevent medical errors if I rely on pharmacists' knowledge of drug interactions. There are so many more examples of how my career depends on my fellow medical professionals. The earlier we start seeing ourselves as teammates rather than a hierarchy, the better we will work as a team, and the better healthcare will be for everyone involved.