

## Interprofessional Practice and Education During the Pandemic



**Christine Arenson, MD**

As the unique year that is 2020 comes to a close, it seems an appropriate moment to reflect back on Jefferson's history as a national leader in interprofessional practice and education, and to look forward to the future. This has been

a year filled with transitions for me personally, and uniquely colored by the COVID-19 pandemic for all of us.

Back in 2007 two educational visionaries, Thomas J. Nasca, MD and James Erdmann, PhD recognized the need to intentionally prepare every Jefferson health professions student to practice as members of effective interprofessional teams. They were the deans of Jefferson's two health professions colleges, the Jefferson Medical College (now Sidney Kimmel Medical College) and the Jefferson College of Health Professions (which at the time included all Jefferson health professions programs except medicine, including nursing). My colleague and mentor Molly Rose, PhD, CRNP and I were fortunate enough to be asked to lead Jefferson's formal interprofessional education efforts and JCIPE was off and running. From the very beginning, Jefferson has approached interprofessional practice and education as a critical tool to improve health, and we have embraced the need to include patients as full members of the healthcare team and critical educators. With that in mind, the Health Mentors Program was our very first Jefferson IPE curriculum, and I am proud that it remains the national and international model for patient as interprofessional educator.

Over the past 13 years, the JCIPE team has continued to grow together with the Jefferson community. JCIPE has enjoyed incredible support from senior Jefferson leaders, including Michael Vergare, MD, former Executive Vice President for

Academic Affairs, and now Provost Mark Tykocinski, MD and President Stephen Klasko, MD, MBA. Not to mention the many patients, faculty and students who have made JCIPE strong since the very beginning! I have watched and learned as leaders like Lauren Collins, MD, Elena Umland, PharmD, and now Brooke Salzman, MD have developed interprofessional learning strategies that prepare our students for collaborative practice so far beyond what Dr. Rose and I could have imagined back in 2007. The Health Mentors Program continues to evolve to meet the needs of our students and our patients. TeamSAFE ensures that every Jefferson health professions graduate has fundamental skills to support patient safety. And advanced opportunities like Student Hotspotting, Team Care Planning and JCIPE's virtual world programs are leading national innovation in interprofessional curriculum.

Most importantly, IPE is just "how we do business" at Jefferson. The enterprise has such a rich history of excellence in patient care. It is only natural that Jefferson would be a national leader in the IPE movement. After all, it's never been about interprofessional education for education's sake; it's always been about preparing all of us who are health professionals to be more effective members of the teams working to improve the health of the individuals and communities we serve.

Which brings me to my new adventure as Co-Director of the National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education (National Center) at the University of Minnesota. After an amazing 34 years at Jefferson (including as a medical student, family medicine resident, geriatric fellow, and member of the faculty), it was hard to say goodbye to my incredible partners and colleagues at Jefferson. But, what an opportunity to build on the lessons I learned at Jefferson!

The National Center was established in 2012 through a unique public-private partnership and exists to bridge the gap between health

professions education and healthcare delivery in the United States, by creating a deeply connected, integrated learning system to transform education and care together. We envision a Nexus where education and practice meet and create multisector interprofessional partnerships to achieve the Quadruple Aim: improve the experience of care for individuals, improve the health of populations, increase value, and enhance professional satisfaction of the workforce. The National Center advances this work through Informing, Connecting, Engaging and Advancing the field of interprofessional practice and education.

2020 has truly been a year like no other. We are living through the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to stress our education and healthcare systems. Then on May 25, 2020, George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis – the home city of the National Center. The national response to the twin pandemics of COVID and systemic racism in America has been dramatic and presents an opportunity to advance interprofessional education as one important part of the answer to creating true health equity in our nation. The National Center has listened to stakeholders across the United States and across many professions to formulate new strategic priorities to be part of the solution. Our fundamental vision of the Nexus of Interprofessional Practice and Education has not changed: *Redesigning both healthcare education and healthcare delivery simultaneously to be better integrated and more interprofessional while demonstrating outcomes.* In order to advance this critical work, the National Center has committed to five areas of strategic focus.

1. Educating Ourselves and Our Communities
2. Think Globally, Act Locally: IPE By the ZIP Code
3. Addressing Racism within Health Teams
4. Co-creating Care with the Strengths of Individuals and Families

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5. IPE Knowledge Generation for Achieving the Quadruple Aim

None of this is new for the National Center, and it stems from a growing body of work that makes it clear that when we improve teamwork and fully engage patients, families and communities, we can and will advance the Quadruple Aim. This is a unique moment in time when we must step back and recognize that we must be intentional about addressing the history of systemic racism in America as part of this process. We are creating curriculum, tools and strategies to advance our work and to support our community to engage with the places and people they serve to co-create better health. Please visit us at [nexusipe.org](http://nexusipe.org) and join us on this journey!

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