

Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine

Joined September 2013

"We need to start talking to engineering schools and business schools and community leaders and nursing and physician assistant programs and begin to provide truly authentic diverse learning experiences for our students." —Therese M. Wolpaw, MD

Penn State College of Medicine's Systems Navigation Curriculum (SyNC) launched in August 2014 and combines a course in the science of health systems with an immersive experience as a patient navigator. The curriculum integrates core systems sciences such as health policy, high-value care and population and public health with 2 threads related to evidence-based medicine, along with teamwork and leadership training throughout 7 modules.

This paper, "Identifying roles, barriers, and strategies to advance the value of undergraduate medical education to patient care and the health system," by authors from Penn State University College of Medicine and the AMA identifies way that medical students in current clinical roles can enhance value by performing detailed patient histories to identify social determinants of health and care barriers, providing evidence-based medicine contributions at the point-of-care, and undertaking health system research projects.

2019 spring consortium meeting

Poster presented: Advanced Health Systems Science Learning Opportunities (PDF)

Need/gap addressed:

- Gaps exist between key needs identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and the formal student curriculum.
- Three CHNA key concerns/priority areas are behavioral health, healthy lifestyles and chronic disease management.
- Key concerns in managing chronic disease include modifiable factors that could potentially be part of a service learning curriculum: lack of transportation, care coordination and transition between providers, patient compliance and self-management impacted by language barriers, cultural habits, family support and cost.



Authentic engagement with community health needs is critical to meaningful learning in several core domains of health systems science—in particular social determinants and population health.

Principal investigator: Therese Wolpaw, MD, MHPE, vice dean for educational affairs