SELECT Readiness: Assessing the Clinical Learning Environment of a Regional Branch Medical Campus

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SELECT Readiness: Assessing the Clinical Learning Environment of a Regional Branch Medical Campus

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Purpose:
In May 2013, third-year medical students in the University of South Florida’s Morsani College of Medicine (USF) and Lehigh Valley Health Network’s (LVHN) innovative Scholarly Excellence, Leadership, and Experiences. Collaborative Training (SELECT) program will begin their clinical training at LVHN in Allentown, PA. In anticipation of their arrival, LVHN identified the need to create a readiness plan that would promote an ideal learning experience for SELECT students and other learners. This is part of a longitudinal design to assess the medical education experience across all four years of medical school.

The purpose of the initiative is to create an optimal learning environment for medical students that emphasizes competence in emotional and social intelligence, patient-centered care, team-based care experiences, and student-centered learning. An assessment of the clinical care environment as an educational ecosystem will provide findings that will be used to develop a plan that supports the desired culture and environment.

Description:
In September 2011, LVHN launched a network-wide strategic initiative known as SELECT Readiness to assess the current state of our learning environment. The initiative builds on the strengths of LVHN and includes a focus on interprofessional teamwork, leadership development, value-based patient-centered care and the use of cutting edge technology. The work of the team is guided by a learning environment framework proposed by the American Medical Association for transforming the medical education learning environment. In addition, the SELECT Readiness interprofessional team of stakeholders is responsible for assessing the learning environment and proposing recommendations that will optimize the institutional culture, educational climate, and address the hidden curriculum. These efforts will enhance the learning environment and ensure stronger alignment with the SELECT formal curriculum.

Transferability:
The project’s structure, approach to interprofessional teamwork, use of a conceptual model for transforming medical education, and review of literature are all potentially transferrable to other regional branch campuses or new clinical sites that seek to optimize medical student learning.

Lessons Learned:
A formal structure and processes that support strategic planning and readiness principles were implemented and guided the planning of the project. Clearly defining the project scope, roles, and timeline early in the process has facilitated subsequent work. In addition, creating buy-in with stakeholders at all levels of the organization is essential. A 26-member SELECT Readiness interdisciplinary project team was developed to include advanced practice clinicians, nurses, physicians, administrators, staff, and clerkship directors. The team is supported by senior-level executive sponsors, project leaders, project manager, project coordinator, health scientists and data analysts, marketing/public relations specialist, and organizational development consultants. The collective wisdom of the project team has been invaluable.

Outcomes and Next Steps:
The goal of the first phase of this initiative is to assess the current state of the learning environment, identify the future state, and develop recommendations that will utilize the strengths of LVHN to promote the optimal learning experience for SELECT students and other learners. The target date for completion of the learning environment assessment and presentation of recommendations is March 2013. The second phase of the initiative will include the implementation and evaluation of the proposed recommendations.