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A Community Health Initiative: Health to the Power of You

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A COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVE:

Health^{YOU}

Stephanie Hendricks (*Pharmacy*)

STUDENT AUTHOR BIO SKETCH

Stephanie Hendricks is a PharmD candidate in the College of Pharmacy at Purdue University. Before beginning her pharmacy career, she earned her bachelor's degree in Biology from Mansfield University of Pennsylvania in 2017. She has been active in a number of organizations and initiatives that promote wellness and health in the community: Purdue University College of Pharmacy Peer Mentoring Program, a tutor for Purdue Athletics, two mass flu clinics, and a COVID-19 vaccine clinic. After pharmacy school, she will complete a two-year residency focused in ambulatory care at the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics, where she will continue her passion for community health.

INTRODUCTION

In April 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the number of healthcare visits. Outpatient and ambulatory care appointments declined by nearly 60% (Mehrotra et al., 2020), which is an alarming rate. Ambulatory care visits allow healthcare providers to help patients manage their chronic disease states, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. To address this decline in visits, Health to the Power of You (Health^{YOU}) was created and developed by Stephanie Hendricks, Doctor of Pharmacy candidate.

During one of Stephanie's pharmacy classes she thought of the Health^{YOU} initiative. She learned that the average American is considered to have a readability level equivalent to that of a fifth grader. This prompted her to analyze how patient education is delivered in a hospital, clinic, and community (retail) pharmacy setting. One 15–20-minute doctor visit is not nearly enough time to talk with a patient about a newly diagnosed disease state, any new medications, and the follow-up that is needed to ensure quality of care. Stephanie brainstormed how pharmacists could bridge this gap and empower patients to take control of their health through education. The

name Health^{YOU} embodies the mission and vision of this idea. With COVID-19's impact on health care visits, it was an excellent opportunity to connect with the community and begin the educational program.

Health^{YOU} began in November 2020 with two of Lafayette's underserved populations: community members (referred to as guests) experiencing homelessness at Lafayette Transitional Housing Center (LTHC) (Figure 1), and residents who are 62 years and older living in Section 8 housing at Fairington Apartments (FA) (Figure 2). This initiative was designed to provide opportunities for student pharmacists in community engagement with a focus on health care advocacy and education. The Health^{YOU} team is comprised of Stephanie (lead team member), peer pharmacy students, the project advisor/preceptor, and the community partner. Students volunteer and/or participate during experiential learning rotations with the project advisor/preceptor.

During the past year of COVID-19, one of the more vulnerable populations were people experiencing homelessness. Research indicated that at least 1,700 of the country's estimated 568,000 homeless people could die of COVID-19, which deemed this a "crisis within a

Figure 1. LTHC site in Lafayette, Indiana.

crisis” (*Modern Healthcare*, 2020). Those who experience homelessness are often people in poorer health, which offers a great opportunity to help intervene with pharmacy services, education, and resources. Health^{YOU} has been working with guests at LTHC since July 2020.

As COVID-19 restrictions increased, the FA service coordinator noted that many residents were isolated in their apartments, afraid to venture out in public, and many were without a support system. While all in-person activities at FA were cancelled, Health^{YOU} team members have engaged one-on-one with residents via Zoom™, by phone, and/or in person.

Throughout Purdue University College of Pharmacy’s curriculum, student pharmacists are educated to be advocates for patients and the community. Throughout the pandemic, student pharmacists have participated at the Purdue University campus and the Greater Lafayette area in mass flu clinics, COVID screenings, and immunizations.

DESCRIPTION

LTHC oversees the entry and initial assessment for people and families experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis in Tippecanoe County, Indiana. In fiscal year 2020, LTHC served 1,817 people. Student pharmacists and the faculty preceptor have visited the Engagement Center and informally engaged with guests. Student pharmacists also volunteer in the kitchen, clean and do laundry, and help with the organization of supplies at LTHC.

Two guests have been involved with Health^{YOU} and participated in biweekly meetings. Meetings were

conducted on site and involved well-being discussions and medical concerns or complications. The faculty advisor and pharmacy students also provided relevant resources and scheduled doctors’ appointments, to which they could accompany the guest and serve as healthcare advocates.

In 2019, the faculty project advisor established a partnership with FA, Section 8 housing for those who are 62 years and older or with qualified disabilities. Student pharmacists engaged with residents as a regular activity during an advanced pharmacy practice experience (APPE) with the project advisor, who is also the preceptor. Residents received health screenings and home visits. Student pharmacists also participated in activities such as Veteran’s Day lunch and wellness presentations at the FA community clubhouse.

While many activities at the apartments were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, Health^{YOU} maintained

Figure 2. FA site in Lafayette, Indiana.

Figure 3. The FA Clubhouse where residents could meet pre-COVID for activities.

engagement with residents individually via Zoom™, phone, and/or in person to promote health and wellness education, and most recently, to facilitate a tobacco cessation program.

Historically, residents have been able to smoke on the property; however, in spring 2020, the property management at FA stated plans to transition to a tobacco-free

property with an initial timeline of April 2021. Since March 2020, regular visits were halted and the tobacco-free timeline was postponed to November 2021. Indiana laws recently expanded to allow nondispensing pharmacists to provide tobacco cessation education and assessment. This will allow the project advisor and student pharmacists to prepare for the transition to a smoke-free property by creating individualized action plans for residents.

At FA, six residents were enrolled in Health^{YOU} (Figure 4). Weekly home visits were conducted and at least three health education topics were discussed over the course of a minimum of nine weeks. Documentation forms were created to provide continuity of care with the intent to keep this program active after Stephanie graduates and leaves the Lafayette area. The forms include initial interview, visit documentation, “wallet cards” and medication lists, topic description and selection (Figure 5), and prepared individualized educational handouts. All resident interactions have been documented and shared with the service coordinator.

As of February 2021, four student pharmacists have participated in Health^{YOU} at both LTHC Homeless

Lesson Plan

Prepared for [resident name]

Prepared by Health to the Power of You

OVERVIEW

Health to the Power of you is a student-run community health initiative started by Dr. Cynthia Koh-Knox Sharp and Stephanie Hendricks, student pharmacist, from Purdue University College of Pharmacy. This community health initiative offers at least 15 outpatient pharmacy services and wellness education. Participants can choose up to 3 services that they would like to learn more about. The mission of Health to the Power of You is to empower community members to become their own biggest healthcare advocate through education.

Outlined Plan

Week	Content
1	Topic 1: Over the Counter Medications + Smoking Cessation
2	Topic 1: Over the Counter Medications: Cold & Flu + Smoking Cessation
3	Topic 1: Over the Counter Medications: Pain + Smoking Cessation
4	Topic 2: Diabetes: Kidney Disease + Smoking Cessation
5	Topic 2: Diabetes: Carbohydrates + Smoking Cessation
6	Topic 2: Diabetes: Recommended Guidelines + Smoking Cessation
7	Topic 3: Smoking Cessation focus
8	Topic 3: Smoking Cessation focus
9	Topic 3: Smoking Cessation focus

Figure 4. Health^{YOU} informational flyer for residents. Created by Stephanie Hendricks, PharmD candidate.

HEALTH^{YOU}

Topic Blurbs

Health to the Power of You is offering 11 services, which are listed

MEDICATION THERAPY MANAGEMENT

Education about prescribed medications. Goal: answer all medication-related questions (reason for the medication, the importance, or any side-effects that may occur, any missed doses).

Good for: all patients

OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS

Education about over the counter (OTC) options available (most commonly located in the pharmacy aisles). This can include OTC allergy, anti-diarrheals, constipation, pain relievers, sunscreens, cold and flu, sleep agents, to just name a few.

Good for: patients with diabetes or high blood pressure

HOSPICE

Through this service we can go over what hospice is and how it is different than palliative care. We can answer any questions that you might have about hospice care.

Good for: all patients

INSURANCE

Through this service we can discuss the different insurance options available, such as Medicaid and Medicare and what they can cover.

Good for: all patients

Figure 5. Example of Health^{YOU} topic blurbs for residents. Created by Stephanie Hendricks, PharmD candidate.

Services and FA. Their involvement with in-person visits and education material development was completed during four-week APPEs with the faculty project advisor/preceptor. Some students and pharmacy student organizations at the College of Pharmacy have expressed interest in volunteering in Health^{YOU} during the academic semesters at Purdue University.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

At LTHC, Stephanie accompanied one guest to a provider appointment at the community health clinic. At the appointment, Stephanie was able to serve as the guest's health care advocate, communicate information in patient-friendly terms, and review the medication list to ensure accuracy. Another Health^{YOU} team member assisted three guests in making dentist appointments.

Over the past four months, Health^{YOU} meetings with individuals at LTHC and FA have included education about diabetes, wound care, tobacco cessation, over-the-counter medications, COVID-19 and vaccines, blood glucose meter instructions, and individualized low-intensity workout plans. Stephanie met with six FA residents weekly for six months to review the resident's top three health topics that they chose at the beginning of enrollment. In those six months, each topic was reviewed in depth for three weeks to ensure the resident felt knowledgeable and could better communicate with their providers. Stephanie created individualized lesson plans for each resident, an educational binder with the weekly topic information, and tracked progress within the binder. At each meeting, the resident was able to ask questions, talk about their experience with the topic, and discuss anything new that happened within the last week. Overall, this health initiative has provided individualized support to eight of the residents and guests. Notable interventions include emotional support to one resident whose brother recently passed away from COVID-19; the reestablishment of home care for a veteran (from the

West Lafayette Veterans Affairs); and education on the excessive use of a nasal decongestant, identification of a high-risk medication error on a medication list, duplicate medications, and receipt of COVID-19, hepatitis B, Varicella zoster, and pneumococcal immunizations.

Stephanie received a Student Service-Learning Grant from the Purdue University Office of Engagement for Health^{YOU} that funded marketing materials and educational tools. A program satisfaction survey will be distributed to current enrollees to gather feedback. An informational flyer will be distributed to LTHC Homeless Services and FA, and hopefully after COVID-19 restrictions ease, more guests and residents will participate.

Challenges faced during this community health initiative involved restrictions with COVID-19. LTHC Homeless Services closed for approximately three weeks, which halted visits. Additionally, it was not always known if a participating guest would be in the LTHC Engagement Center, which resulted in a few missed visits. At FA, the service coordinator was quarantined with COVID-19, which delayed services for about two weeks.

Future plans for this initiative include continued participation of student pharmacists completing the APPE with the faculty project advisor/preceptor. Health^{YOU} plans to incorporate other Purdue University professional students in medicine, nursing, nutrition science, and kinesiology, as they would provide perspectives and promote a collaborative interprofessional approach to wellness and health education. At LTHC Homeless Services, Health^{YOU} plans to engage with guests who have assigned medication lockers in the Engagement Center and those who received permanent housing. Health^{YOU} would also like to organize a health fair two to three times a year to engage more guests. At FA, Health^{YOU} plans to meet with more residents in individual or small group tobacco cessation programming and develop group education on wellness and health.

Table 1. Quotes from Members at FA, LTHC Homeless Services, and a Physician from IU Health Arnett

	Quotes from Those Impacted
FA resident	<i>"I feel that you really care about my health and I look forward to seeing you every week."</i>
FA resident	<i>"Thank you for calibrating my blood glucose monitor and teaching me how to use it."</i>
LTHC Homeless Services member	<i>"Thank you for taking the time to visit me and being my health care advocate."</i>
MD at IU Health Arnett	<i>"Very helpful to see weekly blood pressure trends; we use these numbers when we reassess blood pressure medications."</i>

STUDENT AUTHOR IMPACT

Throughout Stephanie's four years of higher education in the Purdue University College of Pharmacy program, she has been exposed to the importance of public health. Through curricular and extracurricular activities, Stephanie has received professional education and training to recognize health care gaps in various patient populations. After COVID-19 cases occurred in Lafayette, Indiana, hospitals and clinics became restricted, which resulted in a decline in outpatient services. With applied safety measures, Stephanie took the opportunity to meet with underserved populations, increased awareness of the significance of community engagement, developed effective communication skills, and impacted patients' lives through pharmacy services and education.

From this experience, Stephanie applied her didactic education, learned more about ambulatory care services, and developed her clinical documentation skills. In addition to scholastic learning, she cultivated relationships within her community, which furthered her understanding of the three types of empathy: cognitive, emotional, and compassionate.

Pharmacy students in their fourth and last year of the Doctor of Pharmacy program complete 10 four-week APPEs. Stephanie encountered a few challenges since she started the Health^{YOU} initiative during this year of her training. The majority of the challenges related to her personal schedule, which involved work responsibilities and clinical projects and presentations required while on rotations. Each of the four years of pharmacy school has a rigor of its own, whether it is several exams in one week, extra electives, or personal work schedules. By incorporating students across all years, tasks can be delegated, which decreases the burden during more demanding weeks of the academic year and alleviates schedule conflicts. Additionally, there have been discussions about creating an interprofessional group of same-year medical, nursing, nutrition sciences, and kinesiology students to further develop Health^{YOU} programming.

Ultimately, this experience has had a substantial impact on Stephanie's future career goals. She will be pursuing a two-year postgraduate residency at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics where she will pursue board certification in ambulatory care.

CONCLUSION

The impact that student pharmacists have had on the underserved communities goes far beyond COVID-19.

Through Health^{YOU}, students identified gaps in transitions of care including instructions on use of a blood glucose meter; multiple mistakes on medication lists; weekly blood pressure, blood glucose, and blood oxygen trends that require dose adjustments to medications; and receipt of recommended immunizations. This indicates that Health^{YOU} has a place in providing individualized care as an extra step in ensuring medication safety, providing medical education to the patient, and promoting wellness.

Student pharmacists will be able to apply their didactic training, review guidelines and disease states, and experience the rewards of working with patients in an ambulatory care setting. Like Stephanie, more student pharmacists could develop a passion for public health and pursue a new career path as a result of being active in Health^{YOU}. Student organizations at Purdue University provide community service, and this initiative will offer opportunities for college students to engage with LTHC guests and FA residents. The faculty project advisor has discussed this initiative with three pharmacy organizations in hopes that student members will participate. The benefits will be reciprocal for students, residents, and guests.

This article was written to promote the impact of Health^{YOU} on community members of Greater Lafayette and to recruit professional students in medicine, nursing, kinesiology, and nutrition science at Purdue University.

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