Raising All Boats: Part II

The Jefferson College of Population Health (JCPH) continues in its leadership role as a key national thought leader with regard to the emerging fields of underlined graduate study in healthcare quality and safety, population health, and health economics and outcomes research. Nearly a year ago, the editorial "Raising all Boats"[1] described an important meeting in New Orleans, nestled inside the annual meeting of AcademyHealth, where the Deans of emerging schools and colleges of Population Health were working together to standardize the curricular framework for this new discipline. JCPH was the sponsor of that special session, and this piece describes a subsequent panel on related topics at the Society for General Internal Medicine (SGIM) annual meeting in Denver, CO.

SGIM is arguably the nation's most prominent national organization for general internists who practice mostly in academic medical centers. Having joined when it was still called, **SREPCIM** (Society for Research and Education in Primary Care Internal Medicine) at the recent SGIM meeting in Denver, one of us (Dr. Nash) proudly sported a badge noting that this was his 35th anniversary meeting!

While academic longevity is interesting, it certainly is not the core reason for this editorial! Rather, we write to share our excitement that our competitive application to present a special session within the SGIM annual meeting, was accepted by their leadership. In the narrative that follows, we will set the context for the SGIM Annual Meeting, and why we felt it was so important to bring together leaders in the JCPH journey to certify and accredit graduate programs in healthcare quality and safety (HQS).

As of September 2017, there were 12 stand-alone graduate programs in healthcare quality and safety in the U.S. and Canada: four of them started just a few months prior to that date. In response to the significant growth in academic programs in HQS, and the rise of professional development programs in this space, program directors representing these academic institutions met in Philadelphia in the early Fall of 2017 to discuss developing an accreditation framework for stand-alone graduate programs in HQS.

The Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME) was identified to serve as the accreditation partner given the complimentary nature of HQS with healthcare management, and the existing relationships that most partnering institutions already had with CAHME to accredit their academic degree programs in healthcare management. Following the same development process that CAHME undertook nearly 50 years ago for healthcare management education, the group agreed upon a "certification to accreditation approach."

Simply put, nearly a year ago, under JPCH's leadership, one of us (Dr. Oglesby) brought together all of the stand-alone graduate programs in HQS in the United States and Canada. They have subsequently committed to a deep self-evaluation with the goal of becoming certified in healthcare quality and safety under the auspices of a major national accrediting body.

With this accomplishment in mind, our team submitted the aforementioned proposal to SGIM, which was accepted

at their annual meeting. We noted in the application process to SGIM that general internists, among others, are being called upon to assume leadership responsibilities related to healthcare quality and safety as the delivery system moves from one based on the volume of services delivered to the value generated by those services. The goal was that our panel, nested within the SGIM annual meeting, could stimulate the national conversation regarding career trajectory in quality and safety, with a special emphasis on self-evaluation, measurement, and the road toward accreditation. The leadership of SGIM agreed, and our panel had solid attendance during the meeting in Denver.

Dr. Nash was joined in Denver by Anthony Stanowski, DHA, FACHE, the President and CEO of CAHME, who gave a brief overview of its history and current operations. Dr. Stanowski did an excellent job outlining the evolution of CAHME, most especially in the last decade, and why their board of directors felt that accrediting programs in quality and safety was so central to their future mission.

Also participating in the panel were the directors of two current graduate programs, including Annette Valenta, DrPH (University of Illinois) and Sue Feldman, RN, MEd, PhD (University of Alabama) who presented updates on each of their programs. Given that the SGIM meeting had an additional focus on the role of information technology, Drs. Valenta and Feldman emphasized this aspect of their unique curriculum, and how general internists might become strong advocates for the merger of health information technology, and improvements in healthcare quality and safety.

Certainly, general internists are not the only leaders in the HQS movement, but having the privilege of presenting at a major national scientific meeting with a competitive submission process is further evidence of the growth of academic credibility for the 12 stand-alone graduate programs in HQS. This also represented another leadership opportunity for JCPH to "raise all boats", not just for colleges of population health, but for the curricular champions at 12 other graduate schools focusing on the need to improve education in quality and safety.

Looking toward the future, we believe that, Jefferson's leadership role in population health (and HQS as a core component), will serve the delivery system well and will continue to contribute to improving the health of our citizens.

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REFERENCES

1. Nash DB. Raising all boats. *Popul Health Matters.* 2017; 30(3).