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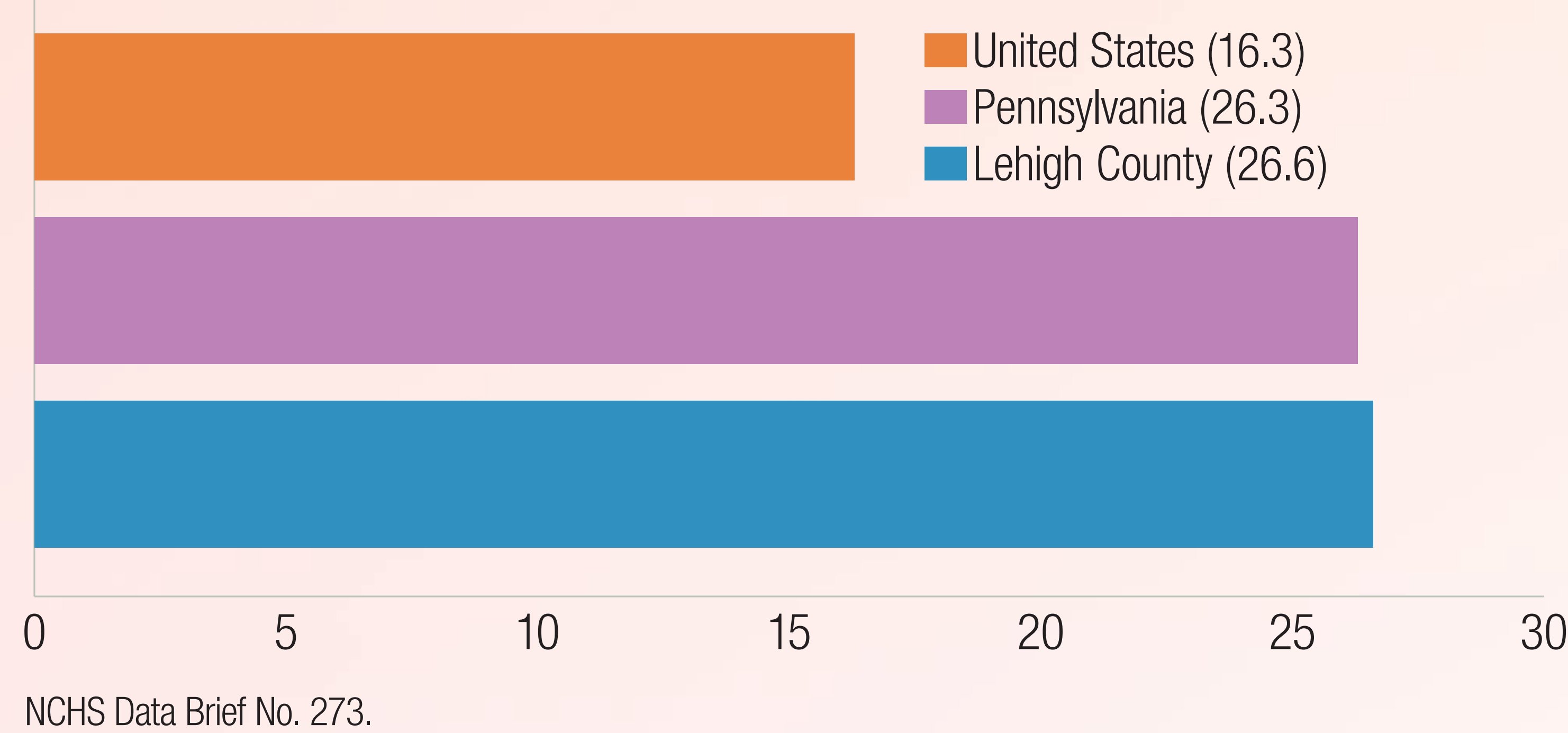
# Opioid Use Disorder Simulation for Preprofessional Health Care Students

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## BACKGROUND

The number of drug overdose deaths in Pennsylvania is increasing more rapidly than drug deaths in any other state in the nation<sup>1</sup>. A majority of the overdose cases can be attributed directly to opioids as the prescription opioid and heroin overdose epidemic is currently the worst public health crisis in Pennsylvania.

### OPIATE OVERDOSES PER 100,000 PEOPLE



Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN), with seven campuses located throughout the greater Lehigh Valley area, has established itself as an integral community partner in addressing the multi-faceted disease of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD).

### LVHN HAS DESIGNED A THREE PRONG APPROACH:

- 1) Prevent new cases of OUD by making sure clinicians are safely and appropriately prescribing opioids
- 2) Treat existing cases of OUD using medication assisted treatment and harm reduction techniques
- 3) Reduce stigma by educating our communities and health care workforce about OUD

## PURPOSE

The reduction of stigma through educational interventions designed to increase positive communication methods and motivational interviewing techniques may influence the current health care workforce as well as the next generation of health care workers. LVHN's Department of Education has developed programming to help shape the future health care workforce with education related to OUD.

## METHODS

In 2018, LVHN piloted an opioid overdose simulation with Emerging Health Professionals, a partnership program between LVHN and Lehigh Career & Technical Institute.

The purpose of the simulation was to expose the 42 high school students to the interprofessional health care team that cares for a patient suffering from an opioid overdose, from first responders to the staff of the Emergency Department to the care team handling the "warm handoff." Students were asked to observe, listen and reflect upon the empathic attitudes and hopeful communication between members of the health care team and the patient/family.



Standardized patient "Pete" looks on as South Whitehall Township Police Officer, Stacey Surdan, administers Narcan to his daughter, standardized patient, "Sarah".

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

After participating in the Opioid Use Disorder Simulation, learners will be able to:

- Recognize the role that biases might play in the health care treatment of OUD patients.
- Observe and reflect upon the empathic attitudes and communication between members of the health care team and the patient/family.
- Describe the role of motivational interviewing and messages of hope in health care and patient change behavior.



LVHN's Senior Education Consultant, Amy Smith PhD, facilitates the discussion during the video portion of the simulation.

### PROGRAM DESIGN:

Curricular elements included:

- LVHN-created video (initial funding provided by The Dorothy Rider Pool Health Care Trust)
- Heroin and Opioid Prevention Education (HOPE) provided by Center for Humanistic Change
- Standard script
- Simulation center setting, standardized patients and "real" health care workers
- Pre/post evaluation delivered through an electronic survey via iPad

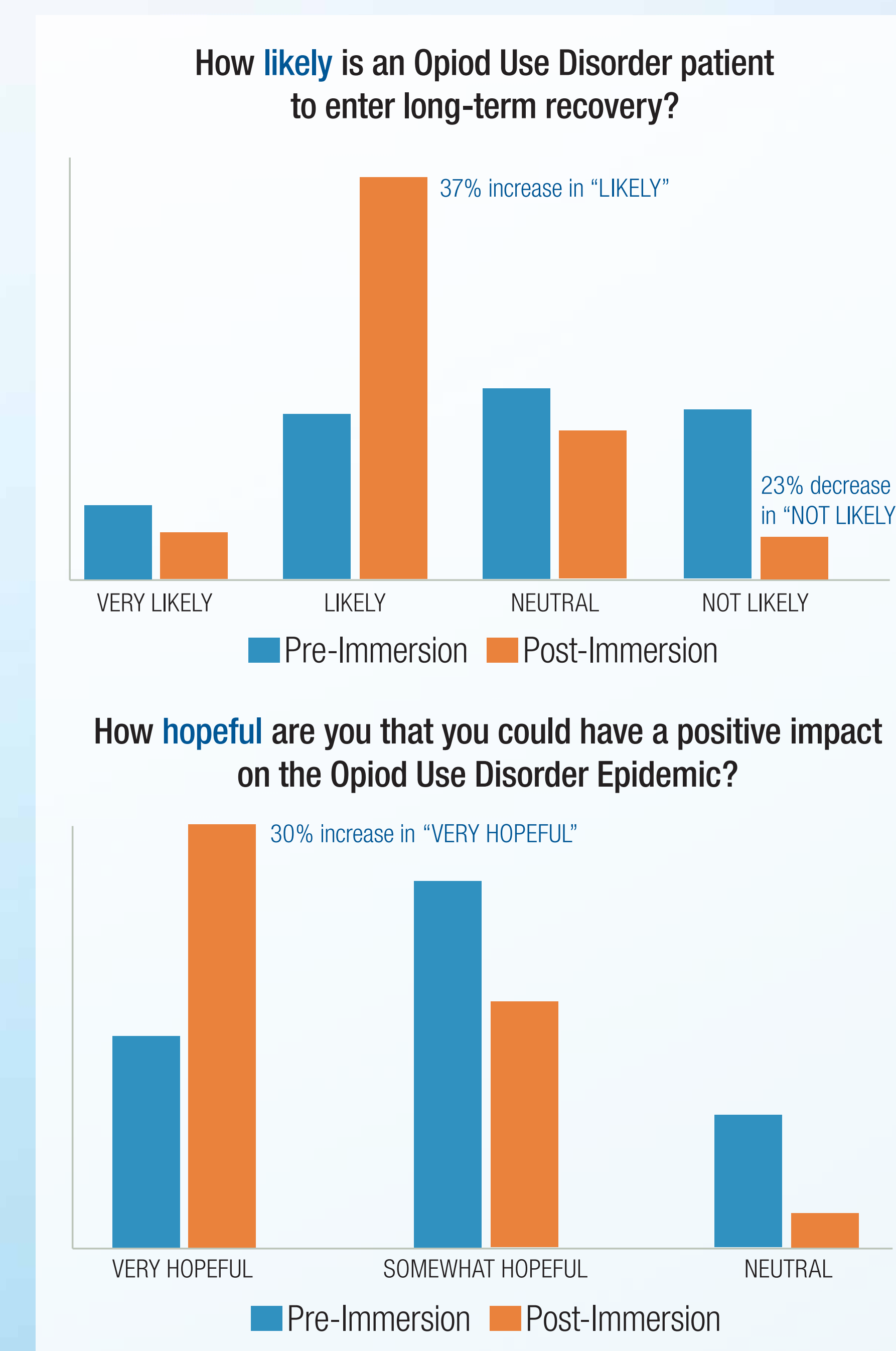


Matt Pallionis, MD, LVHN Emergency Medicine resident, along with Stephen Hall of Cetronia Ambulance Corps and Cassie Fritzing of the Emergency Medicine Institute, simulated the Emergency Medicine health care team.

## RESULTS

Preliminary data analysis found that pilot participants demonstrated:

- increased perception of the importance of inter-professionalism and communication among the health care team;
- increased hopefulness that overdose survivors can recover and live safe, productive lives;
- increased sense of future self-efficacy as a positive influence on the OUD epidemic.



## DISCUSSION

By educating preprofessional health care students about the disease of addiction and the hope for recovery, stigma may be reduced as learners discover how to avoid adverse behaviors and language that may deter individuals in need from accessing treatment for opioid use disorder.

### AS A RESULT OF THIS PILOT

This programming received funding from Lehigh County Drug and Alcohol to deliver OUD Youth Programming Simulation Immersions in conjunction with Center for Humanistic Change. Audiences will include pre-professional health care high school students, undergraduates in nursing and "junior EMS" groups. Future work includes expansion of this programming to a larger professional healthcare community to increase understanding and promote appropriate and respectful language.



LVHN's Addiction Recovery Specialist, Paige Roth, utilizes motivational interviewing techniques while discussing treatment options in a tearful exchange with standardized patient, "Sarah".

## REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Published August 31, 2017.
2. Hedegaard H, Warner M, Miniño AM. Drug overdose deaths in the United States, 1999–2015. NCHS data brief, no 273. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2017.

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