

Very good experiences don't just happen for patients

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A new training program for emergency department staff at Rhode Island Hospital teaches communication skills by having staff take part in simulations of real patient experiences. The goal is to improve the patient experience by standardizing both team and patient communication in an emergency department (ED) setting. The program will be presented at the [12th Annual International Meeting on Simulation in Healthcare](#) (IMSH) in San Diego, Calif.

Principal investigator and lead author Lynn Sweeney, M.D., an [emergency medicine](#) physician at Rhode Island Hospital, is a member of the hospital's [Simulation Center](#). Sweeney and her colleagues developed Project CLEAR! (Communication Leading to Excellence and Ameliorating Risk) to give structure and consistency to the manner in which staff communicate with each other and with patients. "This is the first program that we know of its kind to combine traditional teamwork [training](#) with simulation-based customer service training," Sweeney says.

"Excellence in health care is no longer defined merely by the quality of clinical care offered, but also by the superiority of service provided to those who seek care. The importance of [patient satisfaction](#) has grown over the past decade," she adds. "To be recognized as a top-quality organization, we have to not only provide exceptional care, but our patients and their families have to truly feel how much we care about them."

Project CLEAR! has provided training for a staff of nearly 400,

including nurses, physicians, medical assistants and secretaries in one of the busiest emergency departments in the country. The CLEAR! training day includes a 7-hour interactive experience that features three medical simulation scenarios using both standardized patients and high-fidelity manikins, to teach both Crew Resource Management concepts and customer-service. The simulation scenarios are used to elicit specific teaching points that will impact quality of care, safety and service.

The CLEAR! team formed a unique collaboration with the Texas Tech University College of Mass Communications aimed at sustainment of the lessons taught during the training day. The TTU team assisted in designing a logo to give a brand identity to the project, and on creating a variety of visual messaging instruments placed throughout the ED to reinforce the lessons learned during the training. "The goal of the collaboration, in essence, was to create an internal public relations campaign promoting the program's message," Sweeney says.

Sweeney concludes, "We believe Project CLEAR! will have a dramatic impact on the way our ED staff works with patients to provide not only the best possible care, but also an exceptional [patient experience](#) as well."

Sweeney's principal affiliation is the Alpert School of Medicine at Brown University, where she serves as assistant professor of emergency medicine. The project is funded by a grant from Lifespan's Department of Risk Management and supported by the University Emergency Medicine Foundation, which staffs the emergency departments at Rhode Island, The Miriam and Hasbro Children's hospitals.

Provided by Lifespan

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