

# Interprofessional training in health sciences education has a lasting impact on practice, study shows

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Geriatrics experts have long known that collaboration is key to delivering quality, patient-centered care to older adults.

That's why USC's Interprofessional Education and Collaboration for Geriatrics (IECG) trains up to 150 [students](#) annually from seven health professions to teach the importance of teamwork in meeting the complex needs of the elderly.

Now, a study [published](#) in the *Journal of Interprofessional Care* highlights the long-term impact of IECG on USC health sciences graduates.

Researchers surveyed graduates one to three years after completing IECG to assess how the program influenced their practice. The findings were significant: 81% of the graduates worked on interprofessional teams, 80% reported that IECG had a major impact on their practice, and all confirmed they regularly used the assessment tools learned in the program.

"We've really seen over the last decade that this program consistently improves health profession graduate students' interprofessional knowledge and attitudes and also helps them prepare them for collaborative [practice](#)," said Dawn Joosten-Hagye, first author on the study and professor of [social work](#) at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work.

"This is one of the first studies to actually look at how students sustain their interprofessional education training."

The program was initiated 14 years ago by study co-author Jo Marie Reilly, a professor of clinical family medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, who saw the need for an innovative training model focused on the complex health care needs of older adults.

The [collaborative effort](#) has since included students from dentistry, medicine, [occupational therapy](#), pharmacy, [physical therapy](#),

gerontology, psychology, and social work.

Looking forward, the study's authors believe the IECG model could be adapted to address the needs of other populations with complex health care needs, such as people with disabilities, cancer patients, and children.

**More information:** Dawn Joosten-Hagye et al, A community-based geriatric interprofessional education experience and its impact on post-graduate collaborative practice, *Journal of Interprofessional Care* (2024). [DOI: 10.1080/13561820.2024.2371337](https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820.2024.2371337)

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