



CAUSE
CHANGE AGENTS FOR THE
UNDERSERVED: SERVICE EDUCATION
Illinois State University
Mennonite College of Nursing



The Illinois State University (ISU) Mennonite College of Nursing (MCN) and Community Health Care Clinic (CHCC), working in Academic-Practice (A-P) partnership through the Health Resources Service Administration (HRSA) Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention (NEPQR)-Registered Nurses in Primary Care (RNPC) program is training Registered Nurses (RN)s, students, and other health care professionals to practice at the full scope of their license in community-based primary care teams. This four-year Change Agents for the Underserved Service Education (CAUSE) project is educating a minimum of 72 nursing students and 12 practicing RNs in the Care Coordination and Transition Management (CCTM) model and Association of Community Health Nurse Educators (ACHNE) competencies. It is also educating a minimum of 60 practicing RNs and 30 other health care professionals in the role of the RN practicing at the full scope of their license in community-based primary care teams. The ultimate goal of the CAUSE project is to increase the number of nurses working in primary care at the full scope of their license, to improve the health and well-being of patients outside the hospital, prevent hospital admission via population health management, and to ultimately demonstrate a cost savings through care coordination and management of chronic illnesses, mental health, and substance use issues.

Academic Partner Illinois State University Mennonite College of Nursing

The mission of MCN states: “Mennonite College of Nursing at Illinois State University creates a dynamic community of learning to develop exceptionally well-prepared nurses who will lead to improve health outcomes locally and globally. We promote excellence in teaching, research, service, and practice with a focus on the vulnerable and underserved. We are committed to being purposeful, open, just, caring, disciplined, and celebrative.” MCN was established in 1919 and in 1999, it became the sixth academic college at ISU while offering the following programs: BSN-PhD, BSN-DNP, RN-BSN, Accelerated BSN, FNP, and Post Masters Certificate in school and psych mental health nursing.

Community-Based Partner Community Health Care Clinic

The Community Health Care Clinic (CHCC) has been in operation for over 20 years and is McLean County's only free medical clinic focused on improving access to care for the medically underserved. The CHCC provides a cost-free patient-centered medical home to approximately 1,000 adult patients each year. To best meet the needs of the underserved and increase access to those that need our services most, patients must meet our eligibility criteria to be served. Those criteria are: 1) McLean County resident; 2) Household income below 185% the Federal Poverty Level; and 3) Have no active third-party insurance coverage (i.e., Veteran's, Medicaid, private insurance, Medicare, Marketplace Plan). Consideration is also given to individuals who have some type of insurance coverage but still lack affordable access to healthcare if the other two criteria are met.

Partnership Goals and Results

The goals and results of the first four years of the partnership include the following. 1) Hired and retained two RN preceptors trained to provide CCTM and disease self-management support services to the medically underserved population and 2) continue the partnership between the ISU MCN and CHCC to continue to recruit and retain Bachelor of Science (BSN) students in the CAUSE program to complete 150 clinical experience hours in team-based primary care providing CCTM and disease-self management support services in culturally diverse rural and underserved settings. Through the grant partnership, 46 BSN students have completed their 150 clinical experience hours and graduated the CAUSE program. There are 30 additional students enrolled in the program who will complete their 150 clinical experience hours and graduate in Spring 2023.