

Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way



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I-PASS Study Group Awarded Prestigious John M. Eisenberg Award
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Among the Recipients

Bethesda, Md. – The Joint Commission and the National Quality Forum (NQF) announced the 2016 John M. Eisenberg Award for Innovation in Patient Safety and Quality and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) is among the members of I-PASS Study Group, a patient safety research collaboration, selected to receive the prestigious award during NQF's annual conference, Apr. 4-5, in Washington, DC.

The Joint Commission and the NQF are two leading organizations that set standards in patient care. The I-PASS Study Group represents more than 50 hospitals from across North America dedicated to improving patient safety by standardizing provider communication during patient hand-offs to reduce miscommunication that can lead to harmful medical errors.

The USU team includes study principal investigators Dr. Joseph Lopreiato, professor of Pediatrics and Medicine, associate dean for Simulation Education in USU's F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine and director of USU's Val G. Hemming Simulation Center; Army Major (Dr.) Jennifer H. Hepps, assistant professor of Pediatrics in the School of Medicine, assistant director of the USU Pediatrics clerkship, and associate program director for the National Capital Consortium Pediatrics residency program headquartered at USU; and Army Col. (Dr.) Clifton E. Yu, associate professor of Pediatrics in the School of Medicine and chief of Graduate Medical Education at the Walter Reed National Military Medicine Center (WRNMMC).

The USU/WRNMMC team were involved in the conception of the original I-PASS Hand-off Study in 2009. WRNMMC was one of only 9 hospitals nationwide (and the only federal medical center) to participate in that study which was published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 2014 showing a decrease in medical errors of 23% and adverse medical events by 30% after its implementation. An estimated 80 percent of the most serious medical errors can be linked to communication failures, particularly during patient hand-offs. Hand-offs occur at all changes of shift and whenever a patient changes location in a hospital. USU and WRNMMC were also key leaders--and one of 7 hospital participants-- in the follow-on study funded by a \$2 million grant from the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) to incorporate I-PASS into family-centered rounds, the results of which are pending.

"The I-PASS bundle has revolutionized the way we transmit patient care data from team to team," said Lopreiato. "Transitions of care are a known point of medical errors and reducing them in any fashion will

improve patient safety and quality. I am proud that the USU/WRNMMC team was part of this groundbreaking initiative.”

"In addition to creating key elements of the I-PASS curriculum, the USU/WRNMMC team was the driving force behind implementing I-PASS hospital-wide at WRNMMC, making it the first hospital in the nation to adopt I-PASS across multiple services and specialties,” said Yu.

“These studies and projects have resulted in dozens of publications and academic presentations, as well as a national campaign to disseminate I-PASS in hospitals across the country. In addition to our faculty participation as study PIs, USU has also been a central part of that effort from the beginning. All of the simulation materials for both interventions used for national dissemination were developed using joint USU/WRNMMC resources,” said Hepps.

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About the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, founded by an act of Congress in 1972, is the nation’s federal health sciences university and the academic heart of the Military Health System. USU students are primarily active duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service who receive specialized education in tropical and infectious diseases, TBI and PTSD, disaster response and humanitarian assistance, global health, and acute trauma care. A large percentage of the university’s more than 5,200 physician and 1,000 advanced practice nursing alumni are supporting operations around the world, offering their leadership and expertise. USU also has graduate programs in biomedical sciences and public health committed to excellence in research, and in oral biology. The University's research program covers a wide range of clinical and other topics important to both the military and public health. For more information about USU and its programs, visit www.usuhs.edu.