

Starting the Transformation: Engaging Inpatient Nurses with a Lifestyle Medicine Education Program



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Graphic above illustrates the six pillars of lifestyle medicine: nutrition, exercise, stress, substance abuse, sleep, and relationships.

Purpose

An opportunity was identified to align El Camino Health's core values with the implementation of therapeutic lifestyle interventions as a primary modality to treat chronic conditions. Lifestyle Medicine (LSM) reiterates the organization's core values and principles for nursing excellence as a Magnet-designated hospital.

Background

The American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM) recognizes LSM as a medical specialty to treat chronic conditions including, but not limited to, cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. Lifestyle medicine certified clinicians are trained to apply evidence-based, whole-person, prescriptive lifestyle change to treat and often reverse such conditions.¹

Methods

A knowledge gap was identified to enculturate lifestyle medicine with Magnet principles for nursing excellence. A grant application was submitted to the El Camino Health Foundation for the premier LSM program for nurses. This enabled 15 nurse applicants to participate in this novel program with access to ACLM core competencies and continuing education units. The Inpatient RN LSM Program kicked off in October 2020, concluding with optional certification in lifestyle medicine in November 2021.

Nurse participants engaged in clinical case studies and student presentations on ACLM core competency topics, such as nutrition, physical activity, health and wellness coaching, sleep health, emotional wellness, mindfulness, tobacco cessation, alcohol use, and weight management. Through LSM education and coaching, nurses were challenged to incorporate LSM principles with case studies as instructive examples of translating evidence into practice, sparking discussion and lessons learned from different strategies and tactics.

LSM Core Competency modules were accredited for 32 continuing nursing education units. 10 modules encompass the 6 pillars of LSM (graphic above, left).²

Results

Post program surveys were completed by nurse participants of the program using SurveyMonkey. Survey questions included the following:

- How have you incorporated concepts into the care you provide your patients?
- How have you incorporated lifestyle medicine concepts for yourself, family or community?

Survey respondents described incorporating lifestyle medicine concepts into patient care and in their personal lives. Several reported being more confident about including diet information into their patient education. There were reported changes incorporated into personal practice to include adopting a plant-based diet, exercise, sleep health, and mindfulness.

Implications/Conclusions

Total of 15 nurses successfully completed the LSM Program offered virtually, with education on the 6 pillars and core competencies of LSM. All participants were enabled to apply these practices into the care of their patient, community, and themselves, especially during the COVID pandemic.



Pictured, left: Cheryl Reinking and Alicia Potolsky presenting at ACLM Conference 2022. Graphic, above: El Camino Health Core Values.

References

1. American College of Lifestyle Medicine. (n.d.) Overview. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from <https://lifestylemedicine.org/overview/>
2. American College of Lifestyle Medicine. (n.d.) Core competencies. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from <https://lifestylemedicine.org/project/lifestyle-medicine-core-competencies/>

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