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Interprofessional Telehealth Training for Health Professional Students

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Introduction: During the COVID-19 pandemic, academic programs for health professionals pivoted quickly to deliver sound pedagogy for student training in theory and clinical practice. At the same time, health care institutions transitioned to the use of telehealth as a priority means of delivering primary and specialty care in clinic and community-based settings. To address the need for clinical training in the delivery of telehealth services, Michigan Area Health Education Center leadership developed an online interprofessional training program for students in nursing, medicine, social work, and pharmacy. Objectives: 1) Prepare students to perform effectively in interprofessional teams to conduct a telehealth patient visit. 2) Improve telehealth and interprofessional clinical skills using a standardized patient (SP) encounter. Method: A quality improvement framework and a rapid cycle evaluation process was used. The program consisted of three components: self-paced online learning modules, an online telehealth certification program, and a simulated SP encounter. Interprofessional groups of 2-3 students completed a simulated telehealth encounter with a SP. Program evaluation was completed utilizing the Gap Kalamazoo Communication Skills Assessment (GKCSA), a telehealth essential communication competency checklist, and an IPE knowledge pre- and post-test. Results: Twenty-eight students completed the online didactic content, 31 earned telehealth certification, and 21 students engaged in the SP encounter. IPE post-test scores improved to 100% from the pre-test of 75%. Ninety percent of students received a score of 80% or higher on the GKCSA for the SP encounter. Conclusion: Online telehealth training is an effective means of interprofessional health student education.