

IOWA PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION 2005 POSTER PRESENTATION

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Model for a Health Promotion and Prevention Practicum

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PURPOSE: Health promotion and prevention is an important issue nationally as outlined by Healthy People 2010. The Guide to Physical Therapist Practice affirms that health promotion and prevention is within the scope of physical therapist (PT) practice. The Normative Guide to Physical Therapist Education Expectations 15.1 and 15.2 describe that the student, “conducts screenings, assesses health needs, sets priorities, implements prevention, promotion, fitness and wellness programs, assesses the effectiveness of programs” and “educates clients, identifies appropriate needs, and functions as a consultant.” This practicum model illustrates a practical approach to integrating these broad objectives into the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) curriculum.

DESCRIPTION: Des Moines University DPT program uses a 2-credit-hour practicum in which first year students spend 64 hours or more over 2 weeks in a setting focused on individual, community, and/or corporate health promotion. Students help to locate practicum sites, often in their hometowns, which has allowed the program to expand nationally while keeping costs down for students. A primary goal is to give students exposure to other professionals involved in health promotion outside of the rehabilitation realm. Learning objectives include: demonstrate professional behaviors, communicate effectively with individuals and groups, collect and interpret data to assess a client’s health needs, develop and implement health promotion interventions, determine effectiveness of health promotion programs, and write a business plan for a health promotion/prevention consulting project. As this is a wellness practicum, not a PT clinical internship, site supervisors are educators, nurses, trainers, and administrators. Prior to the practicum, students receive didactic preparation integrated into first year coursework. While out on the practicum, a Blackboard site is used for discussion questions and to share the consulting projects. Upon completion, both students and site directors complete evaluation forms.

SUMMARY OF USE: Three classes of DPT students (n=99) have completed the practicum. Location of practicum sites: 69.4% Des Moines, 9.7% Iowa outside of Des Moines, 20.9% out-of-state. Types of settings: 38% hospital-based wellness centers, 32% community-based programs, 14% corporate wellness programs, 10% schools, 17% other. Populations: 73% adults, 52% geriatrics, 46% adolescents, 30% children. Experiences: 65% program planning, 59%

community education, 28% screening, 27% research. Totals exceed 100% due to exposure to more than one setting, population or experience. Students' rating of practicum: 36% excellent, 43% good, 13% fair, 4% poor.

IMPORTANCE TO MEMBERS: This unique practicum model integrates health promotion and prevention, community involvement and consultation into the DPT curriculum. It allows students to choose from a wide variety of experiences on a national scale and could serve as a model for other PT education programs.

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