

## OU students, faculty take part in interprofessional workshop on opioid abuse

This past week, students in the Oakland University School of Health Sciences, School of Nursing and Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine gathered in the Oakland Center Banquet Rooms to take part in a workshop and discussion about the nation's growing opioid abuse epidemic.

"It is a major issue right now in health care, especially throughout Michigan as well as nationally, so we knew that every one of our professions is dealing with this," said Deb Doherty, PT, Ph.D., an associate professor with the Physical Therapy Program at Oakland. "With the change in the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines (regarding opioid use), we needed to be more aware of what those changes were and how they were going to affect our practice."

The event, which represented the first interprofessional education workshop of its kind at Oakland, kicked off with a talk from keynote speaker Linda Vanni, MSN, RN-BC, ACNS-BC, NP, who is co-chair of the Ascension Health System Pain Management Steering Committee and co-chair of the St. John Providence Pain Advisory Group. Vanni told the audience about her experiences working in health care, with particular focus on new CDC guidelines regarding the use of opioids to manage patients' pain.

"Every single person in here is a patient advocate," she said. "It is our moral responsibility to treat patients' pain . . . but that does not mean we need to use opioids."

Opioid abuse is among the nation's fastest-growing public health crises. According to **data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**, an average of more than 650,000 opioid prescriptions are dispensed and 78 people die from opioid-related overdoses per day in the U.S. Opioids can be highly addictive and include drugs such as hydrocodone (Vicodin) and oxycodone (Percocet).

The keynote was followed by a panel discussion highlighting non-opioid pain control strategies and intervention options to curb the use of prescription opioids. The panel was moderated by Stephen Loftus, Ph.D., OUWB associate professor of medical education, and was composed of four individuals:

- John Krauss, Ph.D. PT, professor of physical therapy in the School of Health Sciences
- Judith Fouladbakhsh, Ph.D., RN, associate professor in the School of Nursing
- Gregg Warren, D.O., radiologist, Beaumont Health
- Bruce Hillenberg, Ph.D., pain psychologist, Beaumont Health

After the panel discussion, students were presented



*Pictured from left: panel moderator Stephen Loftus, Ph.D., and panelists John Krauss, Ph.D. PT; Judith Fouladbakhsh, Ph.D., RN; Gregg Warren, D.O. and Bruce Hillenberg, Ph.D., discussed issues related to the opioid crisis in the U.S.*



*Keynote speaker Linda Vanni, MSN, RN-BC, ACNS-BC, NP, shared her expertise on patient advocacy and pain management issues.*

an appropriate intervention plan. Each student group consisted of graduate nursing, health sciences (Doctor of Physical Therapy and Master of Public Health) and medical students, along with a faculty facilitator.

Here is what students had to say about the workshop:

**Sameen Ansari**, a first-year OUWB student, described the experience as “a great way to see the mindset each profession has and understand their approach to treating the patient. When all of us are informed about what the other professions can do, we can present a unified message to the patient about how to manage their pain.”



*Sameen Ansari*



*Melissa Lakin*

**Jacob Hekker**, a student in the Oakland University-Beaumont Graduate Program of Nurse Anesthesia, added, “There needs to be a culture change

away from opioids being the main therapeutic choice for treating patients with pain and move towards other integrative therapies such as non-opioid pain relievers, psychosocial support, massage therapy, yoga, and acupuncture. We all need to collaborate to figure out what each patient needs because each patient responds to treatment differently.”

**Caitlin Williams**, a physical therapy student, said, “We’ve done case studies before, but you really only get a physical therapy perspective. It was very interesting to work with other professionals to understand how they will see the same case that we’ve seen in physical therapy but have a whole different perspective on it. Discussing that with other people will make me consider a case in a different way now when I see a patient.”

**Melissa Lakin**, a registered nurse, who is nearing completion of OU’s Family Nurse Practitioner program, noted the importance of communication in protecting the well-being of patients. “In health care, there will be a lot of moments of miscommunication,” she explained. “The best way to get past that is to use the interdisciplinary approach of always communicating with other professionals that are in charge of someone’s care.”

The Oakland University Interprofessional Education Task Force, which is composed of faculty from the School of Health Sciences, School of Nursing and Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, organized the workshop and is conducting a research study to examine the attitudes of students related to interprofessional teamwork, roles, and responsibilities, patient centeredness, biases, diversity, and ethics, and community-centeredness.

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*Students from the School of Health Sciences, School of Nursing and Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine examined a case study to explore interdisciplinary approaches to patient care.*