Innovations in Community Clinical Education

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"You have to establish a relationship with someone you don’t know and can’t see."

“I’m from Navajo Nation. I was able to reach out to a Navajo grandmother and really connected to the person on the other end of the phone.”

“The ones that stick that in my mind were older people who were isolated and very lonely. A call that is supposed to last 20 minutes lasted over an hour.”

OBJECTIVES
Our primary goals include:
1. Provide meaningful clinical learning opportunities for students to engage and address needs for vulnerable or at-risk individuals on campus and throughout the state of New Mexico.
2. Foster interprofessional collaboration at the UNM Health Sciences Center between the College of Nursing and the Office of Community Health.
3. Explore emerging models for collaboration, technology and community outreach which prepares future nursing workforce in proactive and responsive health care delivery.

INTRODUCTION
Two faculty members at the College of Nursing collaborated with the UNM HSC Office of Community Health (OCH) to facilitate community engagement with undergraduate nursing students: The Care Calls Initiative and the UNM Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC) outreach. The Care Calls Initiative was developed by the OCH in partnership with the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD), to help reduce a backlog of nearly 18,000 requests from older adults and people with disabilities in need of supportive services through ALTSD. The SHAC outreach entailed nursing students making follow up calls to UNM students for COVID-19 evaluation and services. One effect of the pandemic has been that clinical opportunities have been limited and somewhat tenuous for nursing students.

METHODS
Care Calls Initiative
• 80 senior level undergraduate nursing students were trained and participated in making calls.
• Each week for spring term, 12 nursing students made calls to older adults and individuals with disabilities identified by the New Mexico Department of Aging and Long Term Services across the state, for a total of 16 hours; with two College of Nursing faculty present via a zoom platform to oversee the calls and address any questions.

Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC)
• Outreach initiative started with a pilot of 14 nursing students making follow up calls to UNM students who have screened positive for COVID-related symptoms and following up to ensure that the students are connected with SHAC services, as well as screening for mental health and education needs to maintain health.

FINDINGS/CONCLUSION
• To date the nursing students have called 3000 individuals through the Care Calls Initiative. The students were able to obtain clinical hours and meet the clinical learning objectives through their calls activity. The calls activity included a guided group debrief by faculty after each session of calls.
• The students obtained a valuable educational experience through making the calls, learning about the impact of social determinants of health and assessment of population health needs of individuals across the state of New Mexico.
• The SHAC outreach initiative involves a pilot of 14 nursing students making follow up calls to UNM students who have screened positive for COVID-related symptoms and following up to ensure that the students were connected with SHAC, as well as screening for mental health and education needs to maintain health.

IMPLICATIONS
The need for clinical sites and learning opportunities for students is substantial during the Covid-19 pandemic. The opportunity for students to participate in outreach, patient interviewing, screening, education, and advocacy through telehealth modalities is important for engaging students with future delivery of health care. The SHAC outreach developed nursing skills and experience with peer outreach and support. The Care Calls initiative provided opportunities for nursing students to learn about the social and health care needs of vulnerable populations in communities across the state of New Mexico.