



By Chris Jones

EDUCATION

Sharpening SKILLS IN ICE

She's had Legionnaires Disease, advanced diabetes and was someone who contracted a sexually transmitted disease.

For Marylyn Bremmer, who has participated in the Integrated Clinical Experience (ICE) program for five years, playing the role of someone who contracted an STD was challenging and educational. As part of the program, simulated patients play the role of actual cases that have come through UNMC clinics.

"I take great satisfaction in playing these roles, because I know it's going to help train medical students," she said. "When I play a patient

with a certain disease, I tend to feel the emotion that the patient had in that situation and I believe that a credible performance truly helps the students in the long run.

"I am so impressed at how the students work together and how they ask questions.

Every time I do this I have more respect for the program here at UNMC."

ICE is a required year-long course for first- and second-year students. Its purpose is to provide students with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, attitude and skills needed for a lifetime of successful medical practice.

"We make every effort to teach students what can't be learned in a book," said David Steele, Ph.D., associate professor of family medicine and co-director of ICE. "We want our students

to have good interviewing skills, be culturally sensitive, ethically aware and be able to provide a sense of comfort to a distressed patient."

ICE uses a variety of formats such as lecture, panel discussions, small group activities, community-based clinical experiences and demonstrations to provide students a well-rounded educational experience. The first year of ICE emphasizes the doctor/patient relationship and the clinical experience.

"We teach the students to learn from their patients. We give them the skills that enable them to interact with patients in an effective and compassionate manner," Dr. Steele said.

In the second year of the program, which is led by Jim Medder, M.D., associate professor of family medicine, students are introduced to topics such as preventive medicine, public health, ethics and decision-making.

"By the end of the second year, we believe the students have received a solid knowledge base of public and community-based health-care as well as the background to handle ethical issues in a patient care environment," Dr. Medder said.

ICE also prepares students for the first step of the United States Medical Licensing Examination, which all medical students take at the end of their sophomore year.

UNMC is one of a handful of institutions in the country that initially began this type of program. The program has been reviewed by faculty from other institutions and has received high commendations. Other universities have since added similar programs based on the success of UNMC and other medical institutions. *d*



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First-year medical student James Seberger checks the blood pressure of Marylyn Bremmer during an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). OSCE's are skill-based examinations with simulated patients to help train medical students who are involved in the ICE program.