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Patient Safety Session

When Dr. Deborah German, Dean of the University of Central Florida College of Medicine (COM), graced the cover of Space Coast Medicine.com magazine in August of last year, the 40 members of the COM's first class were moving into their new four-story, 170,000 square-foot state-of-the-art medical education building at Lake Nona to begin their second year of study (<http://trendmag2.trendoffset.com/publication/?i=43853&p=23>).

MEDICAL CITY, FLORIDA (May 12, 2011) –The members of the Charter Class of '13 recently completed their requisite two years of basic sciences and, now in their third year, are learning from and working with clinical teams throughout hospitals in Orlando on core clinical rotations covering surgery, neurology, pediatrics, psychiatry and obstetrics/gynecology.
<http://trendmag2.trendoffset.com/publication/?i=43853&p=23>

Dr. German and her staff structured the curriculum to fully integrate basic and clinical sciences across all four years, and in early May, at which time there was that pivotal transition from the first two years of class work to the reality of direct bedside patient care, provided the class with a week long orientation in preparation for the change.

Like over a thousand other physicians in the Central Florida area, I am on the UCF COM volunteer faculty as an assistant professor in surgery.

I was delighted and honored to get a call in February from Dr. Bethany Ballinger, assistant professor of Emergency Medicine and in charge of patient safety education at UCF, asking me to participate with her as instructor in a three-hour session on patient safety during orientation week for the students getting ready to embark on their clinical rotations.

On day four of Orientation Week, the students filed into the auditorium after lunch for the 1:00 p.m. patient safety session.

After 24 months of intense basic science study, another three hour session on something that might be considered inherent to what they had chosen as a career probably seemed, at first, to be an opportunity to catch up on e-mail and facebook, or complete the interminable electronic HIPPA and confidentiality forms needed to start rotations at affiliated hospitals.

However, we used the first 40 minutes to show a powerful and compelling video of a true story about Lewis Blackman (www.lewisblackman.net), a healthy young man who entered the hospital for an elective operation and died a preventable death four days later.

The progression of events and the culture of the clinical team that failed to rescue Lewis captured the attention of everyone in the auditorium and was the genesis of meaningful dialogue related to the “real world” of clinical medicine.



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Patient advocacy; the keys to success of an effective patient care team, of which the students must consider themselves an integral and respected member; unwavering attention to detail in the clinical environment; the concept of the “Golden Rule;” and the Mayo brothers’ motto to “always first meet the needs of the patient” were all discussed and embraced by the M3 class.

I hope that the three-hour session was as valuable to the students as it was gratifying for me to have the opportunity to spend time and share my thoughts on patient safety with them.

Many thanks to Dr. Ballinger for inviting me to participate, and my very best wishes to the Class of '13 as they move into the next phase of their careers.