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UNH Initiative Will Help Meet the Demand for Addiction Treatment in the State

Monday, November 5, 2018

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DURHAM, N.H.—The University of New Hampshire will train dozens of its nurse practitioner students and community health providers throughout the state to better address New Hampshire’s opioid epidemic, thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The training will provide support to community practices struggling to meet the demand for addiction treatment and increase provider confidence in treating patients with substance use disorders.

The initiative will support the training of family and psychiatric nurse practitioner students in providing medications for addiction treatment. Working together with community health providers, the UNH-based program will increase access to treatment for substance use disorders. The program will also provide training for practicing nurse practitioners and physicians throughout the state.

Delivered through an innovative telehealth format called Project ECHO, the program will link nurse practitioner students with community-based providers to teach best practices in treating substance use disorders. So far, five practices in two rural New Hampshire communities have signed on to participate.

“As one of the largest providers of nurses to the New Hampshire workforce, it’s critical that UNH take a leadership role in addressing this major health crisis,” said Gene Harkless, chair of the department of nursing. “We look forward to being part of the effort to increase much-needed access for patients seeking substance use disorder treatment, as well as to better preparing our students to enter the workforce with a critical knowledge set.”

Through the adoption of a comprehensive opioid addiction and treatment curriculum using health information technology, beginning next spring the program will train approximately 50 UNH nurse practitioner students per year in MAT prescribing and management. Participating students will graduate as waived providers, meaning they will have the knowledge and license to engage in substance use disorder treatment and prescribe alternative medications in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies.

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH’s research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.



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