Policy and Advocacy

Advocacy & Funding - The Wider Community

As LEND trainees, we were fortunate to hear from Dr. Carl Fertman on April 6, 2016. Dr. Fertman is an internationally recognized expert in the health education and health promotion field. His knowledge covers a variety of topics, including: health education and health promotion program planning, implementation, and evaluation, health theory, and health counseling. His research focuses on the effectiveness of health programs to address the health needs of children, adolescents, and adults in schools, communities, and workplaces. Dr. Fertman’s lecture focused on the wider community from the MCH Leadership Competencies, namely: Working with Communities and Systems and Policy and Advocacy.

 Our discussion with Dr. Fertman began with a focus on finding our vision as future healthcare professionals as well as the complexity of navigating the healthcare system for our patients. This was exemplified through a peg game (or penny game for our class purposes) that can be found at Ihop or Cracker Barrel restaurants as a model for clinical practice. The purposes of this game were to learn to work together as a team to solve a complex problem while understanding that without writing down the steps to solving our problem it would be incredibly difficult to replicate. Not only did this demonstrate teamwork, but it also highlighted the necessity of documentation. It is important for us as healthcare providers to document our findings and treatment sessions in order to replicate them in the future. Proper documentation also helps to establish medical necessity.

Dr. Fertman encouraged us to consider our individual and collective professional trajectories. In order to become well-rounded healthcare professionals, he argued, we must claim a vision for the future. Without looking ahead, it is nearly impossible to ensure that our visions become realities. Just as this simple game demonstrated, if one fails to think “a few moves ahead” it is easy to get stuck. This game also sparked a conversation about the various barriers and difficulties associated with navigating our changing healthcare system. Dr. Fertman dedicated a significant portion of his presentation to explaining the process of acquiring healthcare insurance through the national and state Marketplaces. The game also provided space for the LEND trainees to consider multiple strategies for addressing complicated and sometimes inaccessible systems of care. Overall, Dr. Fertman’s presentation provided the LEND trainees with a powerful experience, and a metaphor for understanding how our future patients and clients might navigate a system to find quality healthcare at a reasonable cost.