

# A Service-Learning Clinical Rotation that Delivers Rural Medication Access

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### Community Outreach and Service-Learning

The Ohio State University is a land-grant institution; therefore, "our mission is to lead the way in making our knowledge more accessible to others." This is accomplished through unique partnerships with governmental and private agencies, institutions, industry, and citizens of Ohio, where teaching, service and research collaborations strive to meet the needs of partners. In harmony with the University's Mission, the College of Pharmacy's Mission is: "To identify community needs that would benefit from the knowledge and skills unique to pharmaceutical sciences and the profession of pharmacy." These needs can serve as a foundation for the establishment of appropriate community/College of Pharmacy partnerships where congruent missions and goals exist. In this way reciprocal relationships can be formed to serve both community and College interests.

Service-learning provides an ideal pedagogy to bring the University and College missions of community outreach to the classroom. Service-learning is "the intentional linking of community service with specific learning and development outcomes that is valuable to students, colleges, and communities. Our aims for this fourth year experiential rotation located in a rural Appalachian setting were to:

- Develop and implement a plan for medication access that incorporates the collaboration of a physician, the county health department and a pharmacist.
- Consider issues and express thoughts about rural and indigent health care.
- Apply patient counseling skills and point of care services in a rural healthcare setting.
- Learn how to refer patients in this particular setting to appropriate community, state or federal programs and services that might improve their healthcare or utilization of health services.



### Medication Access

Because of the high prevalence of uninsured citizens, development of a medication access program was chosen by a community focus group as their project of choice.

The medication access program will be developed by faculty and students from The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy over a 12-month period.

The program will be housed in and maintained by the local physician's office.

The College of Pharmacy will continue to oversee the program, seek ongoing funding, and involve students in its support.

In time, the program may be expanded beyond the physician's office in order to offer medication access to other physicians' patients.

Aims of the Medication Access Program are:

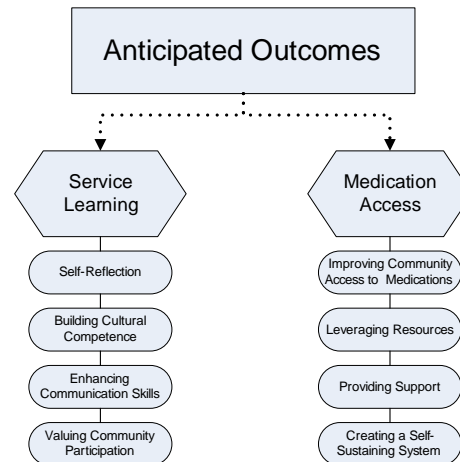
- Increased medication utilization compared with before the development of the program.
- Reduced incidence of health problems related to inconsistent medication use.
- Increased patient comfort with asking health providers for assistance.
- Improved communication between patient and health care provider.

### Appalachia Ohio

Laurelville, Ohio lies 50 miles southeast of Columbus. It is a rural community situated at the junction of the Appalachian foothills and the surrounding plains. Laurelville's population is approximately 700 people and the surrounding rural community consists of approximately 10,000 people within a ten-mile radius from the town center. The region is an economic mix but has a significant segment of poverty similar to other rural, Appalachian regions. Healthcare access has been very limited until only recently, and this accentuates the already-detrimental influence of poverty on health. The Hocking County Health Department does visit Laurelville monthly to administer its *Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)* program and to give immunizations.

Until recently, Laurelville did not have a pharmacy of its own and the nearest physician or pharmacy was 20 to 30 miles distant. In August, 2002, an independent pharmacy was established in Laurelville and one of the co-authors (CCB) works as a pharmacist on a volunteer basis.

In April 2004, the Berger Healthcare System established a physician's office in Laurelville and it is this physician with whom we collaborate.



### Progress to Date

- Startup funds (\$5000) were obtained from an industry-cosponsored, university service-learning grant.
- A service-learning course syllabus was developed and the 5 credit hour course (Pharmacy 799) has been approved for 4th year entry-level students.
- A student has been enrolled in the 12-month, longitudinal course which requires a 4 hour per week time commitment.
- Reflection exercises have been developed and conducted with the student.
- The authors and the student met with local citizens, community leaders, and stake-holders to obtain support and to identify a worthwhile, valuable project.
- A presentation has been given to the Laurelville city council, which has offered its support.
- The authors and a 4th year pharmacy student have established a relationship with the Laurelville physician. She wishes to collaborate on the project and has offered her office as a "base of operations".
- The authors and the 4th year student have met with the Chief Executive Officer of the Berger Healthcare System and have obtained permission to use the physician's office to house the project.
- Computer equipment and medication access software have been purchased with grant money.