

Telehealth Rotation Gives CR Nurses a Glimpse into the Future

February 23, 2011 by Tina Tvedt

Starting Spring 2011, nursing students at the College of the Redwoods have the opportunity to train at the Telehealth and Visiting Specialist Center (TVSC) as part of their clinical rotation.



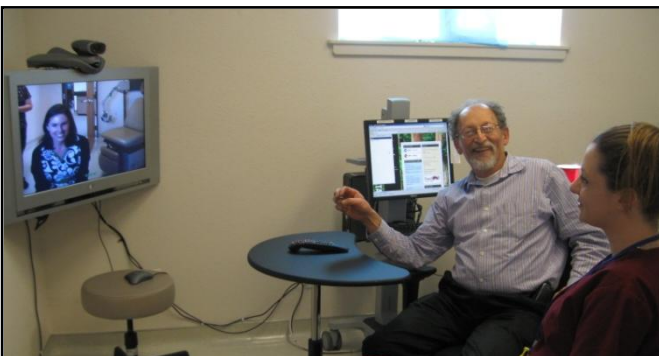
CR Nursing Students Stacey Wilkinson and Leigh Mead with Community Instructor, Kady Dunleavy, RN, MA at TVSC

Currently, students who train at TVSC are exposed to a variety of health care services via live interactive video patient visits and asynchronous digital image transmission. These include children's psychology, diabetes education, retinal screening, and behavioral health counseling to reinforce their didactic coursework. Students learn about insulin, dieting, and self-management goals to help patients better control their diabetes, as well as, the various medications and family member involvement for the treatment of behavioral health disorders.

This rotation provides a dramatically different learning environment because visits are not face-to-face and students don't work hands-on with patients as they would in a traditional clinic or hospital environment. "The patients are open and comfortable using the technology", explains CR nursing student Leigh Mead. Using the telehealth technology, health care providers teach students a different skill set to interact effectively with patients located at remote sites. Listening skills, attentiveness to slight behavioral cues, and how to ask open-ended questions are all important capabilities.



CR Nursing Students Stacey Wilkinson and Leigh Mead using a retinopathy camera



Pediatric Specialist, Norman Bell, MD with CR Nursing Student Stacey Wilkinson

Telemedicine enables the delivery of health care services that are otherwise inaccessible. In a rural area, such as the North Coast, existence and use of these services is invaluable to improve the health of this underserved population. Training nursing students how to use telehealth technology is a significant achievement in preparation of our future health care workforce.