

INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATION PROGRAM PARTNER AWARD

THE MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE HAS RECEIVED
THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATION PROGRAM PARTNER AWARD FOR 2008



2008 CASE STUDY

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College of Veterinary Medicine

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

In recognition of its outstanding commitment to improving faculty instruction & client communication, the Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine has received the Institute for Healthcare Communication Program Partner Award for 2008.

In December 2002, IHC received a major grant from Bayer Animal Health to develop twelve modules aimed at training veterinary school instructors in client communication. Dr. Sarah Abood, assistant professor of small-animal clinical sciences and coordinator of student programs at MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine, was one of six individuals to provide input on the development of the initial training modules.

When IHC then offered its inaugural training program for veterinary instructors, Dr. Abood and fellow MSU faculty member, Dr. Michelle Kopcha, were part of that first cohort of trainees, and Dr. Chandra Grabill, a psychologist with the college, joined them in the second round. Additional faculty and staff members took part in subsequent years, and by August 2008, the college had trained 38 people. At this time, the college has the distinction of having trained more faculty than any other school in North America. MSU CVM is also unique in having trained

several licensed veterinary technicians, adjunct faculty members in private practice, and support staff who are not directly linked to instruction yet are influential through their interactions with students and/or clients.

This significant achievement could not have happened without the support of the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine dean, Dr. Chris Brown, who believed it was important to train a critical mass of the college's faculty and staff. IHC helped MSU meet that goal by bringing facilitators to the MSU campus. A distinct advantage for holding annual weeklong training programs on campus was the ability to work in the Learning and Assessment Center.

The Learning and Assessment Center, a joint effort of the health professions colleges at MSU, opened in March 2006. It houses 20 examination rooms where learners can practice both communication and technical skills using standardized

patients/clients, simulation models, and computers. Each exam room is equipped with video and audio data capture systems that can be used to provide feedback to learners and to record performance for evaluation.

Standardized client actors are trained to play the role of animal owners in veterinary scenarios representing a range of issues. For some exercises, the standardized clients also bring a dog or cat with them. Depending on the learning objective of the exercise, there may be a strict script to which the client adheres. Students may be required to collect a history, discuss a diagnosis and treatment plan, deliver bad news, or perform a physical examination on a pet. Each exercise does, of course, involve communication skills, as well as the students' hard-earned knowledge of science and medicine. Faculty and staff members who have been trained in giving and receiving feedback make it possible to use this unique facility to maximum advantage.



DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Dr. Sarah Abood, assistant professor of small-animal clinical sciences and coordinator of student programs at MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine well remembers the day when a student told her, "I'm not worried about performing in the classroom; I'm terrified about walking into the exam room."

Providing appropriate opportunities and the right environment for students to further develop their professional communication skills has been a goal of Abood's for several years now.

"We can't wait until students enter the clinical phase of their training," Abood says. "Being able to interview clients, practice empathy, and translate medical knowledge so that it's understood by colleagues and clients are skills that require continued practice."

With more than three-dozen instructors, clinicians, adjunct faculty, technicians, and support staff committed to enhancing their own communication skills, the college is well positioned to mentor future generations of graduates.

ABOUT THE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Veterinary science courses have been taught at MSU since the institution's founding in 1855. The College of Veterinary Medicine was formally established as a four-year, degree-granting program in 1910.

Today, the college includes four biomedical science departments - microbiology and molecular genetics, pathobiology and diagnostic investigation, pharmacology and toxicology, and physiology; two clinical departments - large-animal clinical sciences and small-animal clinical sciences; two service units - the Veterinary Teaching Hospital and the Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health; and several research centers.

In addition to the professional DVM program, the college also offers certificate and bachelor's degree programs in veterinary technology, as well as advanced degree (master's and doctor of philosophy) programs.

The College of Veterinary Medicine is fortunate to have an outstanding faculty, all of whom hold the doctor of veterinary medicine degree and/or the doctor of philosophy degree. Nearly all of the specialty boards recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association are represented on the faculty. Many of these faculty members are leaders in their fields, both nationally and internationally.

Michigan State has a long-standing commitment to equal opportunity and multiculturalism. The College of Veterinary Medicine has attained national recognition for its leadership in programs for the encouragement of underrepresented groups at the preprofessional, professional, and advanced studies levels, as well as for increased diversity in its faculty.

The abundance and variety of animal agriculture and companion animals in Michigan provides the college with one of the largest clinical and diagnostic caseloads in the country. Educational and research opportunities are considerably enhanced by this large caseload.

The college also takes seriously its obligation to meet the needs of society in addition to clinical services and education. The college has expertise in public health, biomedical and comparative medical research, ecosystem and environmental management, and the multiple facets that compose our complex global food system. CVM also supports key animal health programs conducted by both the Michigan Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

VETERINARY TEACHING HOSPITAL

The Veterinary Teaching Hospital is a service unit of the College of Veterinary Medicine, as well as the site for the clinical instruction of veterinary medicine and veterinary technology students. It is the primary referral center in the state, accepting challenging cases from veterinary practitioners throughout Michigan, neighboring states, and Canada.

With about 23,000 patient visits annually, the VTH has one of the largest caseloads in the nation. An additional 113,000 animals are seen during field service calls. The hospital staff includes specialists in anesthesiology, cardiology, dentistry, dermatology, emergency medicine/critical care, internal medicine, nutrition, oncology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, radiology, soft-tissue and orthopedic surgery, theriogenology, and zoo and wildlife medicine. The VTH also provides routine veterinary care, such as check ups and immunizations for local clients.

DIAGNOSTIC CENTER FOR POPULATION AND ANIMAL HEALTH

The Diagnostic Center for Population & Animal Health (DCPAH) is a full-service veterinary diagnostic laboratory offering more than 800 tests in 11 service sections. In the more than 30 years since its inception, DCPAH has become one of the country's premier veterinary diagnostic laboratories, handling approximately 1.5 million tests annually.

Income from the laboratory is reinvested in teaching, research, and outreach for the purpose of protecting human and animal welfare domestically and around the world.



ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATION

The Institute for Health Care Communication (IHC) was organized in 1987 to enhance the quality of health care by improving communication between clinician and patient. Nationally accredited, the Institute has partnered with hundreds of health care organizations throughout North America. The Institute's flagship workshop, Clinician-Patient Communication to Enhance Health Outcomes, has trained more than 160,000 clinicians in the "4Es" of communication (Engage, Empathize, Educate, Enlist).

Since 2002, IHC expanded the scope of communication training to the field of veterinary medicine through a grant from Bayer Animal Health. This program, the Bayer Animal Health Communication Project, provides knowledge, skills, and educational tools to enhance relationship-building with clients and health care teams in veterinary medicine. The BAH Communication Project has been steadfast in its commitment to address gaps in communication skills training within schools of veterinary medicine and in the practice community through the development of educational modules for teaching communication. Since June 2003, the Project has provided professional development to 148 faculty members from 34 schools of veterinary medicine in the United States, Canada and Australia.



ABOUT THE PROGRAM PARTNER AWARD

The Institute launched its Program Partner Award in 1999. The award recognizes partners who have made an extraordinary effort to address the issue of clinician-patient communication within their organizations. Recipients of the award include:

- 1999 Veterans Health Administration – Department of Veterans Affairs
- 2000 Permanente Medical Group
- 2001 Geisinger Health System
- 2002 Physicians' Reciprocal Insurers
- 2003 American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons
- 2004 COPIC Insurance Company
- 2005 Affinity Health System
- 2006 College of Veterinary Medicine – Washington State University
- 2007 ISMIE Mutual Insurance Company
- 2008 College of Veterinary Medicine – Michigan State University



Dedicated to improving communication between clinicians and patients.