



*Transforming professional performance through the power of interaction*

## **How Technology Supported a Meeting of the SP Minds**

**By Sharon Youkey, Greenville Health System**

The staff at the Clinical Skills Center of the Greenville Health System (GHS) Simulation Center began planning our first in-service SP day, entitled “Beyond the Basics,” prior to ASPE 2015 in Denver. I was so excited to see the poster produced by our neighbors in North Carolina, Kelly Branford from Duke and Nita Skillman from Elon, about the program they organized for their Standardized Patients. Kelly, Nita and I talked briefly during the poster presentations and discussed the potential of future collaboration.

Realizing the benefit that comes from the sharing of ideas and information that I enjoyed and appreciated during the ASPE convention and realizing that our SPs were unable to travel to Denver for the SP Day, I became even more committed to reproducing that sharing at our local level. In my networking at the ASPE convention I met **Scott George** from Clinical Skills USA, a friend and mentor, but also the Executive Director of the program that provides the GTAs and MUTAs who support the University of South Carolina Medical School Greenville (USCSOM Greenville) medical students. I shared with Scott my thoughts about using Skype or Facetime to connect our SPs with his “Guiding Patients” in order to exchange ideas and explore areas of mutual interest.

Even though our SP Program existed for many years before USCSOM Greenville was birthed in 2012, it was a very small program with only 10-15 active SPs to service the M3 OSCES and CPX exam for USCSOM Columbia students who had transferred to Greenville to complete their medical school requirements years at GHS. Our program experienced incredible expansion since 2013 as we now employ 85 SPs. Their interest in performing as SPs, appreciation of their role in educating students, and a growing desire to improve the profession is manifested by the feedback they provide. Our staff is committed to meet their needs.

It was clear as our staff worked with Scott that Skype should be the vehicle to unite our groups. Thus, on July 8 we connected our 40 SPs with Scott’s employees who work with nursing, physician assistant, physical therapy and nutrition students. The one-hour discussion was facilitated in Greenville by one of our SPs. It was our goal that this hour be solely managed by and dedicated to the SPs in Greenville and Atlanta. Some of the questions posed were about SP job expectations, difficult issues that could arise in the work place, and how to become a world-class program.

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The sharing of differing perspectives, experiences and methodology was helpful in broadening the knowledge of all of the participants on both sides of the tele-conference. But more importantly was the kinship established between two programs separated geographically but supporting a mutual sense of membership in a professional role that extends far beyond our own local organizations.

Based on the post survey completed following the event, the hour was considered very meaningful and there was an expressed desire to repeat this experience in the near future. The value of conversation with peers cannot be underestimated. When distance and finances prevent a face-to-face conference, technology can facilitate a virtual meeting that is just as rewarding. I am thankful to the staff, our SPs, and to Scott George and his SPs for the time and expertise provided to make this event a success.

Wouldn't it be beneficial if we could network multiple SP programs to facilitate discussion without travel and expense? The next best thing to being there!!

- Sharon Youkey RN, SP Educator, Simulation Center, Greenville Health System
- Scott George, MLIR. Clinical Skills USA

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