

4-3-2017

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Recommended Citation

Weinstein, Mark D., "Chicago's Underserved Cared by Cedarville Students" (2017). *News Releases*. 441.
http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/news_releases/441

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 3, 2017

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Chicago's Underserved Cared by Cedarville Students

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Providing cross-cultural experiences for its students is a goal of the Cedarville University School of Pharmacy. Focusing on serving the underserved is of paramount importance.

A team of students in the professional pharmacy program recently spent a week at the Lawndale Christian Health Center (LCHC), a nonprofit clinic in a primarily underserved, minority neighborhood in Chicago.

Tyler Michael, Stephanie Cailor, Charles Snyder and Sara Evans, all third-year professional pharmacy students, participated in the project that provided health services.

"We didn't have a lot of direct patient care, but the pharmacy director said the work we accomplished in a week would've taken him over a year to complete," said Snyder. "And through the university's resources, we were able to access information LCHC wouldn't have had otherwise."

That information included more than 100 studies finding evidence of the financial and clinical benefits of expanding the role of a pharmacist in the community. Over the course of the week, 13 educational patient displays were created and placed on LCHC waiting room TV screens with topics such as birth defect prevention, American Heart Month, smoking cessation, stroke prevention and World AIDS Day.

The community around LCHC is heavily Spanish-speaking, so the team encountered a language barrier throughout their service.

"We weren't expecting much of a cultural immersion, but it taught us that you don't have to go outside the country to get an intercultural experience – there's culture all around the U.S.," said Cailor.

Because professional pharmacy students are required to go on an international or domestic missions trip, the concept of cultural competency is integrated into coursework to help prepare them. Cultural competency trains students on how to interact with people with a language barrier and with low health literacy.

"If it wasn't for our training in cultural competency, we wouldn't have known how to complete our work to the benefit of the community," said Snyder. "Our education gives us the experience and skills we need to serve effectively."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,760 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.