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News Release

USU Faculty Create Groundbreaking Patients as Advisors Program

Bethesda, Md. — Janice L. Hanson, Ph.D., Ed.S. (assistant professor of Medicine, Pediatrics and Family Medicine) and Virginia F. Randall, M.D., M.P.H. (associate professor of Pediatrics), both at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), have created a program with the aim of enhancing medical students' professionalism by incorporating patients and families as co-teachers in the medical education curriculum.

The Patients as Advisors program was created with the intent of improving the teaching of doctor-patient interaction by providing patient and family insights regarding how a physician should behave, and aims to benefit medical students, residents, faculty, curriculum planners, patients and their families. This program answers the call for increased emphasis in medical education on the relationship between patients and physicians, as well as equipping young physicians to understand and consider the context of a patient's life when planning health care. The program stresses the professional competencies of altruism, dutifulness and compassion in medical students, as well as evaluating the students' capacities for those principles.

The program brings together patients and patients' families in focus groups to determine important competencies for physicians and develop new educational activities. The program also incorporates home visits for medical students, presentations by parent- or patient-advisors, interactive learning with parent co-teachers, and research with patients and families.

USU is located on the grounds of the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. The university is the nation's federal School of Medicine and Graduate School of Nursing and grants the degrees of M.D., Ph.D., Dr.PH, M.S., M.P.H., and M.S.N. USU is a typical academic health center with a unique focus on health promotion and disease prevention and the specialized mission of educating health care practitioners to deal with peace and wartime casualties, national disasters, emerging infectious diseases and other public health emergencies.

The University is a partner in planning and establishing the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), a 21st Century academic health center. This new multi-service institution will provide state-of-the-art health care, education and research across all uniformed services; closely collaborate with the National Institutes of Health and the US Public Health Service writ large; and set a new standard for inter-governmental collaboration. USU will be the academic core of this new entity with WRNMMC as a premier teaching hospital and clinical care center serving the nation and our uniformed beneficiaries.

For more information about USU, visit www.usuhs.mil and to receive more information about Patients as Advisors, call the Office of External Affairs at (301) 295-1219.