

## **Improving the Health of Communities: Students as Leaders in a Community Clinical Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Immersion**

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**Abstract :** This community immersion employs the NLN Excellence Model which challenges nursing programs to create student-centered, interactive, and innovative experiences to prepare students for roles in providing high quality care, effective teaching, and leadership in the delivery of nursing services to individuals, families, and communities (NLN, 2006). Senior nursing students collaborate with ethnically and linguistically diverse participants at community-based sites and develop leadership roles of coordination of care linkage within the larger healthcare system, adherence, and self-care management. The immersion encourages students to develop competencies of the NLN Nursing Education Competencies Model (NLN, 2012), proposed to address fast changes in health care delivery, which include values of caring, diversity, and holism; and integrating concepts of context and environment, relationship, and teamwork. Students engage in critical thinking and leadership as they: 1) assess health/illness beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices, explore community resources, interview key informants, and collaborate with community participants to identify learning goals, 2) develop and implement appropriate holistic health promotion and disease prevention teaching interventions promoting continuity, sustainability, and innovation, 3) evaluate interventions through participant feedback and focus groups and, 4) reflect on the immersion experience and future professional role as advocate and citizen.

**Keywords :** quality of care, health of communities, students as leaders, health promotion

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