**Preparing healthcare students better serve underserved communities through a hybrid training program**

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**Abstract**

With the purpose of expanding healthcare students’ training opportunities in underserved settings, this study will partner with local underserved communities and healthcare faculty at SIU to develop a hybrid clinical training program that promotes SIU healthcare students in nursing program, radiology program, and healthcare management program to serve in underserved communities. The hybrid clinical training program consists of two phases, four-week in class training in a game-based learning environment (phase one) and two-week onsite training at local underserved communities (phase two). Upon completing the training program, students will receive three academic credit hours.

A pilot study will be conducted to evaluate the feasibility of the training program and identify potential modifications once the training program has been developed. Expected outcomes of this project include a hybrid clinical training program designed for healthcare students in SIU, publications in peer-reviewed journals and presentations, stakeholder dissemination events (e.g., meetings, workshop), traditional information sharing items for local partners (e.g., fact sheets, technical reports, e-mail bulletins and newsletters), and new media connections with local partners (e.g., gamified applications for smartphones).

This project will also provide empirical data regarding the effectiveness of hybrid training program on healthcare students’ knowledge and attitudes toward care in underserved communities. The proposed hybrid training model will provide in-depth insights for educators and policy makers to develop curriculum and policies that improve healthcare students’ knowledge of underserved populations and more importantly, confront students’ bias of underserved populations and potentially increase willingness in providing care for underserved populations in the future.