

Promoting the Role of Humanities in Compassionate Patient Care

College of Medicine – Phoenix
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With a passion for science and an appreciation for literature, art and music, **Jennifer Hartmark-Hill** understands the vital role humanities plays in compassionate patient care.

Hartmark-Hill, director of **capstones** ^[1] and community faculty development at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix, said she recognized the impact humanities had on her life during medical school.

Exposure to the medical humanities and strong role models at the UA College of Medicine – Tucson, where she graduated in 2005, became the inspiration behind founding the **Program for Narrative Medicine and Medical Humanities** ^[2] at the Phoenix medical school.

"I am really grateful for the opportunity to have founded the program," she said. "Narrative medicine practices provide transformative perspectives for our students and practicing physicians. It helps them value and invite patient stories in order to provide more compassionate and personalized care."

When narrative practices are employed, she said, the results are improved patient outcomes, satisfaction and safety.

Hartmark-Hill traces her interest in patients' stories to her childhood.

"My mom is a nurse, and growing up, I revered her patient stories," she said. "I wanted to pursue medicine so I could provide care for people in a meaningful way."

Another force that shaped her career as an educator and physician was growing up in a medically underserved, rural area in northern Minnesota. At the time, her hometown of Eveleth had no health care provider, so residents had to drive to another town to receive basic care. They were hours away from a large hospital.

Over the last decade, Hartmark-Hill has volunteered and worked at clinics for medically underserved populations, including the **Wesley Community and Health Center** ^[3] and the HonorHealth Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health system. Currently, she serves as medical director of the **Student Health Outreach for Wellness** ^[4] Clinic in Phoenix, a tri-university, student-led initiative that provides free health care and education for the homeless.

After graduating from the College of Medicine, Hartmark-Hill completed her residency in family medicine at Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale. She also completed a yearlong faculty development fellowship.

"During my third year of medical school, I fell in love with family medicine because of the ability to have a longitudinal relationship with patients of all ages. I also believe that preventive medicine is in the best interest of the patient," said Hartmark-Hill, who also is curriculum co-director at the college's **Center for Simulation and Innovation** ^[5]. "The results are not always as dramatic and immediate as doing surgery, but if you have helped a patient avoid an expensive procedure or hospitalization, you have done the best for them. When preventive medicine-minded physicians are able to motivate and empower people to take charge of their health, that is tremendously satisfying."

Hartmark-Hill said she wants to inspire students to always keep in mind the best interest of the patient, so they can be an advocate for the health of the patient, as well as the health of the providers and the profession.

"Narrative medicine and the humanities, alongside the best evidence from the medical sciences, are important approaches for promoting these values," she said.

Source URL: <https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/promoting-role-humanities-compassionate-patient-care>

Links

[1] <http://phoenixmed.arizona.edu/education/degree-programs/md-program/curriculum/pre-clerkships/year-1-and-2-capstones> [2] <http://phoenixmed.arizona.edu/bioethics/narrative-medicine> [3] <http://phoenixmed.arizona.edu/community/community-involvement/community-activities/wesley-community-and-health-center> [4] <http://www.showaz.org/> [5] <http://phoenixmed.arizona.edu/simcenter>