

Clinical experiences, work observations inspire BC3 R.N. students' curiosity

Dec. 11, 2019



Phil Green, 34, a 2005 graduate of Ford City High School and student in Butler County Community College's Nursing, R.N., program, discusses his group's evidence-based practice and change in healthcare research with a guest in the A.K. Steel Lobby of Succop Theater on BC3's main campus in Butler Township on Friday, Dec. 6, 2019.

(Butler, PA) If you're a hospital patient, the amount of intravenous narcotic pain medication you receive to treat your discomfort could be decreased by the hospital's implementation of music therapy.

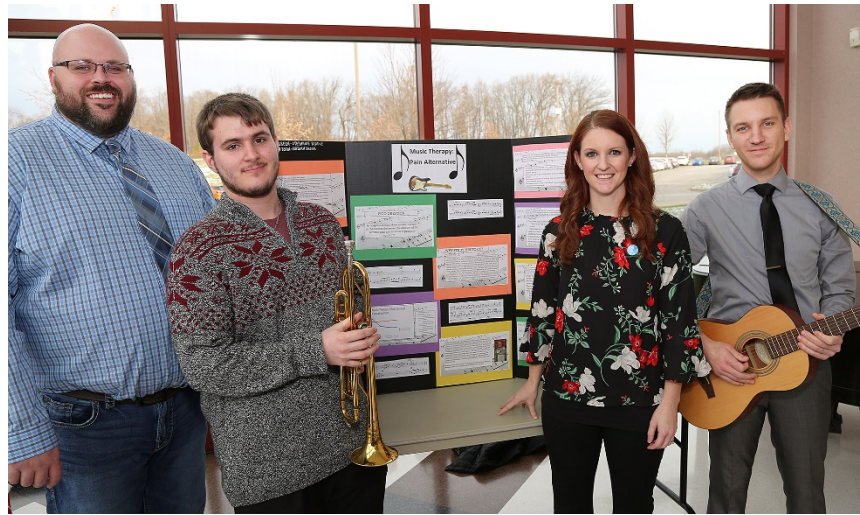
Hospitals' serving of fresh, whole foods rather than retail, processed foods will increase your health.

And your medical facility employer providing a laundry service for your scrubs will protect you from bringing unwanted pathogens into your home – and possibly back to work again.

So say Butler County Community College students in evidence-based practice and change in healthcare research on topics inspired by their clinical training within hospitals, and augmented by observations of some students employed in the medical field and all while pursuing the associate in applied science degree in Nursing, R.N., they hope to achieve from BC3 in May.

Evidence-based practice and change in healthcare research from BC3's Nursing, R.N., students required by the Shaffer School of Nursing and Allied Health's Nursing 103 course began Aug. 26. Their conclusions this fall are collectively called "New Minds of Nursing at Work."

Their findings were on public display Friday in the A.K. Steel Lobby of Succop Theater on BC3's main campus in Butler Township and will be on exhibit Dec. 10 at BC3 @ Brockway, the only of BC3's five additional locations to offer an associate degree in Nursing, R.N.



Students in Butler County Community College's Nursing, R.N., program on Friday, Dec. 6, 2019, presented evidence-based practice and change in healthcare research in the A.K. Steel Lobby of Succop Theater on BC3's main campus in Butler Township. Presenting research on "Music Therapy: Pain Alternative" were, from left, Phil Green, 34, a graduate of Ford City High School; Logan Ryan, 21, a Butler High graduate; Stephanie Riddle, 34, a Neshannock High graduate; and Nathan Shook, 27, a Butler High graduate.



Students in Butler County Community College's Nursing, R.N., program on Friday, Dec. 6, 2019, presented evidence-based practice and change in healthcare research in the A.K. Steel Lobby of Succop Theater on BC3's main campus in Butler Township. Presenting research on "Home vs. Facility Laundering" were, from left, Jayna Sturgeon, 37, a graduate of Kittanning High School; Jennifer Pompelia, 49, an Indiana High graduate; Alyssa Weibel, 20, a Karns City High graduate; and Kathryn Hartzell, 21, a Knoch High graduate.

“Their curiosity is making them dig deeper”

Students attending BC3’s main campus program receive clinical training in medical facilities such as Butler Memorial Hospital, Butler; Armstrong Center for Medicine and Health Hospital, Kittanning; Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh; Allegheny General Hospital, Pittsburgh; the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, McCandless; and Allegheny Valley Hospital, Natrona Heights.

“They’re all exposed to many different clinical settings through this program, and they’re able to compare the different things that they’re seeing and they’re curious,” said Kristine Kenny, a BC3 nursing instructor. “Their curiosity is making them dig deeper so they can go out and practice with their learning.”

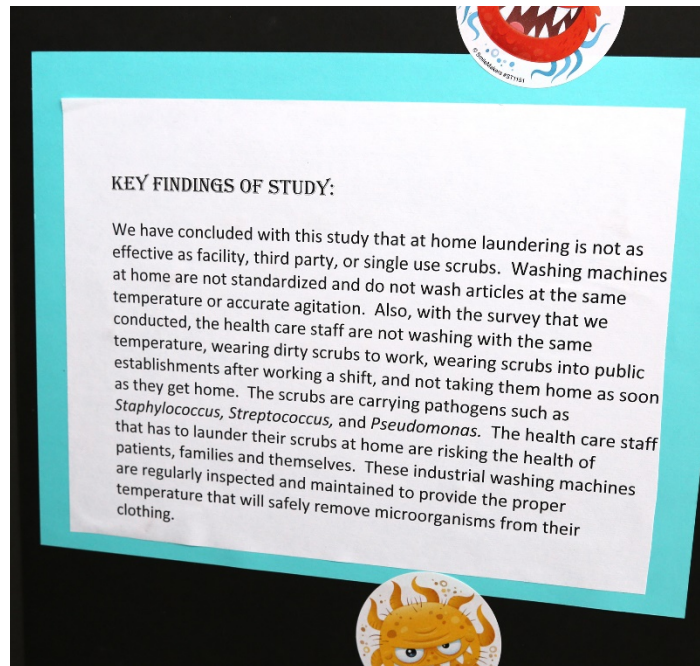
Research topics in addition to those titled “Music Therapy: Pain Alternative,” “Food for Thought” and “Home vs. Facility Laundering” addressed 11 other subjects that intrigued 55 students, said Julia Carney, a BC3 nursing instructor.

Those students also questioned whether the amount of bacteria on acrylic or polished nails is significant enough to ban their use in a healthcare setting, whether the use of paper towels to dry hands is more effective than air dryers in preventing the spread of infection, and whether routine vaccinations are safe.

BC3 students also researched “Should ancillary staff do CPR?” which “actually came from an incident of one of our current students having a patient nutrition service, and thought someone was dying and called someone out,” Carney said.

Medical facilities can ultimately benefit from the requirement in BC3’s Nursing 103 course in that it intends to create change, if needed, in the healthcare system, Kenny said.

“This is how hospitals practice,” Kenny said. “This is evidence-based practice. They can take what they came up with and possibly apply that to the hospital at which they will work.”



A detail photograph of key findings in a study conducted by students in Butler County Community College’s Nursing, R.N., program in a project titled “Home vs. Facility Laundering” is shown Friday, Dec. 6, 2019, in the A.K. Steel Lobby of Succop Theater on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township.

“It actually changes practice”

In addition to the experience gained through BC3’s clinical training, students who work as certified nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses or in other healthcare capacities share their observations with fellow students while attending BC3.



“The students are coming from a lot of different facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, and they will say to me, ‘At this particular facility they do this,’ and ‘At that facility they do that,’” said Dr. Patty Annear, dean of BC3’s Shaffer School of Nursing and Allied Health.

Students in Butler County Community College’s Nursing, R.N., program on Friday, Dec. 6, 2019, presented evidence-based practice and change in healthcare research in the A.K. Steel Lobby of Succop Theater on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township. Presenting research on “Food for Thought” were, from left, Dominic Gargiulo, 21, a graduate of Wilmington High School; Sydnee Markle, 20, a Karns City High graduate; Thinh Nguyen, 29, a Seneca Valley High graduate; and Hunter Gifford, 20, a Karns City High graduate.

“And they are able to compare and use their research as to which one works, and maybe which one doesn’t.”

Many hospitals require its nurses to conduct evidence-based practice research.

“This is what all of us have done as nurses in healthcare facilities,” Kenny said. “And it changes practice. It actually changes practice.”

In requiring its Nursing, R.N., students to conduct evidence-based practice research, the college is creating inquisitive leaders before they enter the workforce, into which they will take their ideas about music therapy, processed foods, scrubs laundering, polished nails, hand-drying options or vaccinations, Kenny said.

“They are doing this as students,” Kenny said, “and if they get into these hospital settings, this is what nurses do. They are researchers. They are scientists. They have to look into the research and find out the best way to practice something. Question it. Be a leader. This questioning of practices is a leadership skill.”

“Music Therapy: Pain Alternative” presenters Phil Green, 34, of Butler; Stephanie Riddle, 34, of Neshannock Township, Lawrence County; Nathan Shook, 27, of Butler; and Logan Ryan, 21, of Butler, reported research that showed a decrease in numeric pain scale results for post-surgical patients who received music therapy compared to results from a control group.

“Food for Thought” presenters Sydnee Markle, 20, of Karns City; Thinh Nguyen, 29, of Cranberry Township; Dominic Gargiulo, 21, of New Wilmington; and Hunter Gifford, 20, of Karns City, said hospitals’ serving of fresh, whole foods rather than retail, processed foods will increase your health.

Whether hospitals’ serving of fresh, whole foods could decrease the length of your hospitalization – the second part of the students’ research – was inconclusive, Gargiulo said.

“The length of stay is the difficult one,” Gargiulo said. “The research has been done. But whether it’s been implemented in the hospital, that’s the tricky part. So this idea of a healthier way of eating has not been implemented into many hospitals.”

“Home vs. Facility Laundering” presenters Kathryn Hartzell, 21, of Kittanning; Jayna Sturgeon, 37, of Kittanning; Jennifer Pompelia, 49, of Indiana; and Alyssa Weibel, 20, of Chicora, reported research that showed that medical facility-laundering, or third-party laundering of scrubs, is more effective in killing pathogens than is washing scrubs at the employees’ home.

Nearly 93 percent of graduates in BC3’s 70-credit program in Nursing, R.N., in the past year were successful in taking the post-graduation National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses test for the first time, according to Annear.