Training Program in Occupational Exposure Prevention

Chinese fellows visit Center in December

The Center ended a busy year by hosting, during the second week in December, a distinguished group of Chinese thought leaders in infection control and healthcare worker safety for its Fellows Training Program in Occupational Exposure Prevention. Center Research Director Elayne Kornblatt Phillips had visited China in October to speak at a conference on healthcare worker safety, and asserted that “healthcare workers, administrators and policymakers were poised to move forward” on needlestick safety legislation. The group that came to U.Va. is well-equipped to lead that charge.

The fellows included two leading Chinese physicians in infection control and infectious diseases—Bijie Hu and Baiyi Chen, Dr. Hu is chairman of the Infection Control Branch of the China Preventive Medicine Association, the largest organization for infection control in China. He provides expert consultation on infection control policy to the Chinese Ministry of Health, and organizes China’s largest and most prestigious infection control conference. In 2009, he led a group of collaborators in establishing an EPI Net surveillance network in Shanghai that includes 70 hospitals; he will be responsible for organizing training and guidelines for the network. Dr. Chen is Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases at the First Hospital of China Medical University in Shenyang, and directs the Infection Control Quality Control Service for Liaoning Province. During 2010 he will organize an EPI Net sharps injury surveillance program and work on related policy for China’s northeast region.

Also participating in the December program were Niuyun Sun and Patricia Ching. Ms. Sun, Deputy Director of the Healthcare Safety and Risk Management Center at the National Institute of Hospital Administration, is responsible for drafting regulations regarding management of medical devices and equipment in clinical hospitals for the Chinese Ministry of Health. In 2010 she will focus on safe use of medical devices and safety-engineered equipment, and will help organize clinical studies on needlestick injuries and catheter-related bloodstream infections. Patricia Ching (shown in picture above with Elayne Kornblatt Phillips during Phillips’ October visit to China) is Senior Nursing Officer in Infection Control and Quality Improvement at Hong Kong’s Queen Mary Hospital, and past chair of the Asia Pacific Infection Control Nursing Association. She has worked on healthcare worker safety and sharps injury issues for over 10 years, and frequently conducts training and educational workshops for key opinion leaders in mainland China. 

In China, as in many countries around the world, hospital-acquired infections (HAIs)—including healthcare worker infections from occupational blood exposures—have become a topic of urgent concern. The 2003 SARS epidemic revealed a need to strengthen healthcare worker protection from infectious diseases—the WHO estimated that almost 20% of those infected with SARS in China were healthcare workers.

Participants in December 2009 Fellows Training Program (1-3): Dr. Bijie Hu (China Preventive Medicine Assn.); Niuyun Sun (National Institute of Hospital Administration); Dr. Baiyi Chen (First Hospital of China Medical University); Siyuan Liu, BD/China; Elayne K. Phillips; Xiaodong Gao (China Preventive Medicine Assn.); Guamei Xu (Fall 2009 Visiting Nurse Scholar, U.Va. School of Nursing); Janine Jagger.


Our Mission:

Setting a global standard for healthcare worker protection

Healthcare workers are a crucial resource in all countries. But in many places, they are at high risk of acquiring preventable, life-threatening occupational infections.

We believe healthcare workers everywhere should be provided with the basic protections that have been shown to prevent exposures and infections. We believe that these measures should be mandatory, and should be provided free of charge to workers:

- Hepatitis B vaccination for all healthcare workers.
- Elimination of unnecessary sharps.
- Availability of safety-engineered needles and sharp medical devices.
- Availability of basic barrier garments for blood intensive procedures.
- Post-exposure prophylaxis for all healthcare workers who sustain an occupational exposure to HIV.