

## **Camp Cardiac: Panel of Nursing Students Presenting on the Nursing Profession**

### **By:**

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Camp Cardiac is a one week summer day camp which is held in various cities throughout the nation. One session was held from August 3-7th at the University of Maryland school of Medicine and coordinated by medical students (Medical student coordinator was Connor Oates). The camp is open to all high school students who are at least 15 years of age. During this special week, high school students receive their CPR certification through the American Heart Association as well as receive basic lectures of the heart anatomy and physiology as well as engage in hands-on workshops and learn about healthy heart eating habits and exercises. But although the camp is geared towards high school students who are looking to pursue a career in medicine there is a time slot carved out for other healthcare professionals to introduce and present their roles on the healthcare team. Some of my fellow nursing school classmates and State Nursing Association (MANS) board members (Board Members included Stephanie Swope and Andrew Richardson) as well as I presented the nursing profession to the students. It was not surprising to find that most of the students didn't actually know the role of a nurse. The first question I asked the students was "When you hear the term nurse, what is the first thing that comes to mind?" I received answers like "cleaning poop", "overworked", "changing linen", "reports to the doctor". There was only one student that said "explain/educate", and it was because she had a prior experience with nurses due to a family member of hers being in the hospital for an extended period of time.

Our panel of nursing students explained that nursing is more than just being at the bedside. Nurses are everywhere. Nurses are providers in clinics and hospitals, legislators and lobbyists on Capitol Hill, entrepreneurs, administrators, specialists, anesthetists, school nurses, researchers, professors, legal consultants for large firms, etc. I explained that the opportunities for nurses at this juncture in time are endless. This somehow spurred copious amounts of discussion and the students began asking questions left and right. They were surprised that the nursing profession held so much versatility. We even had some medical students ask questions because they needed clarification on certain nurse roles. We also stressed that nurses are a part of the healthcare team which is made up of physicians, physical therapists, social workers, occupational therapists, pharmacists, etc. and we explained that no one role is more important than the other, but more so that everyone has a role to play in aiding the patient to get better.

Overall it was a successful presentation and I'm very sure we enlightened many of the students, both the high school and medical students on what the nursing profession has to offer. At the University of Maryland, we champion interdisciplinary collaboration. The medical students were very happy to have us and hoped to collaborate again in the future to continue to educate our community on are specific roles within the interdisciplinary healthcare team.

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(Both Stephanie, Drew and I are from Maryland, but I'm originally from Upstate New York, and moved to Maryland 2 years ago)