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## 2010-04-01: A healthy calling to serve community

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## A healthy calling to serve community



Van Amburgh works with PharmD candidate Kyle Nicholson, left, on administering a prescription to Thanh Dung at the Neponset Health Center. Photo by Lauren McFalls.

**April 1, 2010**

When **Jenny Van Amburgh** isn't teaching students in the classroom at Northeastern, she's treating patients at a community health center in Dorchester.

Once a week, Van Amburgh, associate clinical professor of pharmacy at the **Bouvé College of Health Sciences**, helps patients at the Neponset Health Center manage their medications.

It's her way of giving back.

"Working in a community health center gives me the opportunity to help care for underserved patient populations," said Van Amburgh,

who developed the outpatient practice site at Neponset 10 years ago.

This led to an ongoing partnership between Northeastern and Harbor Health Services, Inc. (HHSI), a public health agency that oversees community health centers, to provide comprehensive pharmacy services for patients at Neponset and their other community health centers.

In collaboration with nurse practitioners and physicians, Van Amburgh teaches patients who have chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension, how to manage their medication regimens and make healthful decisions.

"Keeping patients healthy requires that they fully understand treatment plans, including medications, and that pharmacy health-care providers present them with critical information to treat their disease most effectively," said Van Amburgh.

Van Amburgh is not alone in her commitment to the community. Several Northeastern faculty work at HHSI and six other community health centers, providing important patient services. Another faculty member volunteers at an elder service program in Boston. Collectively, they give thousands of hours of service each year.

HHSI has recognized Northeastern faculty for their services, naming Robyn White, an assistant clinical professor in Bouvé, its clinician of the year in 2008.

Plans are under way to expand the Northeastern-HHSI collaboration, with the addition of faculty members at practice locations. In the short term, HHSI will open its first medical pharmacy at the Neponset Health center.

In addition to providing Northeastern faculty with opportunities for service, community health centers give Northeastern students valuable opportunities for experiential learning. Pharmacy students are required to work in the field with many of the centers, right on the front lines of patient care, said Van Amburgh.

"The experiential learning opportunities at community health centers give students the hands-on experience necessary to excel in the field," said Van Amburgh. "It exposes them to such a wide range of issues that patients deal with on a daily basis."

For more information, please contact Jenny Catherine Eriksen at 617-373-2802 or at [j.eriksen@neu.edu](mailto:j.eriksen@neu.edu).

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