**Standardized Patient Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is a Standardized Patient (SP)?**

A Standardized Patient (SP) is someone who has been trained to accurately and consistently portray the personal history, physical findings and personality traits of an individual patient at a given point in time.

**What is the Volunteer Standardized Patient (SP) Program at St. David’s School of Nursing?**

The Volunteer Standardized Patient (SP) program represents a powerful educational tool to help students in the health sciences understand the key issues, attitudes, and skills health professionals need to successfully provide excellent patient care. In the program, volunteer SPs are trained to act as patients and portray the same characteristics with each student encounter at a given point in time.

**Who can be a standardized patient?**

Men, women and children of all ages and ethnic groups are needed to represent the various cases and patient problems used for teaching. Acting experience is not necessary. All necessary training is provided by the staff of St. David’s School of Nursing Simulation Laboratory.

**What does it take to be a Standardized Patient?**

To be a standardized patient it is important that you:

* Have the ability to maintain confidentiality
* Are proficient with the English language both oral and written
* Have a good short-term memory to remember the specifics of your role
* Have at least a full morning (8am-12pm) OR one full afternoon (12pm-5pm) available during the week on a regular basis
* Have reliable transportation
* Have Email you can access daily
* Have a telephone number where we can reach you

**I am an actor. This should be easy for me and a good experience, too.**

Perhaps. You may find the role of a standardized patient much more difficult than working from a script or within common improvisational outlines, and you may find it very frustrating. The work of an SP has nothing to do with finding dramatic moments, entertaining, or playing to an audience. The role of an SP can be very repetitive; the same patient must be presented for every student. In addition to portraying the case, you will need to observe the behavior of the learner, provide balanced and objective feedback, and stay flexible to the needs of the faculty in each situation. The work of an SP also is confidential, and you will not be permitted to share SP material or use it in any public or private performance.

**What are the advantages for students?**

Standardized Patient encounters provide simulations giving students the opportunity to work with a variety of routine, difficult and sensitive clinical situations in a safe environment where mistakes cannot harm a real patient. Students are also provided with feedback from faculty, peers and the SP to enhance their learning experience. Periodic evaluations of interactions with SPs also allow students and faculty to develop individualized learning plans based on student performance.

**Why should I become a Standardized Patient?**

Being a Standardized Patient provides a unique opportunity to be involved in the medical education of tomorrow’s health care providers. Theoretically, students who participate in health care simulations develop superior communication skills and make fewer mistakes when they begin to treat real patients.

**Will I need to expose the private parts of my body or take part in genital rectal examinations?**

No. Invasive exams such as genital and rectal examinations will not be performed on you.

Specially trained SPs are contracted from an outside source to provide this experience to the students. If your Standardized Patient role requires that you wear a cloth hospital gown, your undergarments and/or shorts and tank top will remain on during the case. Many SP cases do not require that you change clothes.

**Do I have a choice of the Standardized Patient cases for which I will volunteer**?

Yes. Standardized Patients can choose which cases they want to portray after learning all the requirements of the case.

**How do I learn more?**

The contact information is listed below (Email is best). Thank you for your interest!

**Virginia Rojo, MA, BSN, RN**

**Standardized Patient Coordinator**

**St. David’s School of Nursing**

**512-716-2951**

**virginia.rojo@txstate.edu**