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CROSS-DISCIPLINARY EDUCATION FOR THE INTEGRATION OF COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

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This project was a study to address to readiness for integration of complementary and alternative therapies (CAT) in an acute rehabilitation hospital. As there was limited research on the integration of CAT in the rehab setting, the organization partnered with academia to conduct this study. The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes, knowledge, and use of CAT among healthcare professionals (nurses, therapists, and physicians) as readiness indicators for integration. A descriptive research design examined attitudes, knowledge, and use of CAT among 74 participants disciplines. Overall, a positive attitude toward CAT was found among all participants. The study found that most participants did not have any formal training in CAT modalities and evidence-based practice was important to this population. As the study suggested a readiness to begin the process of integrating CAT in this rehabilitation facility, learning needs have to be identified, educational opportunities made available and ethical/financial concerns shared. Another consideration by this researcher, supported by the findings of limited knowledge of CAT, is the integration of CAT at the baccalaureate nursing level. The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education in Professional Nursing, the California State Board of Registered Nurses, and the NCLEX-RN all have language including CAT in the nurses scope of practice. This provides a strong argument to incorporate CAT into nursing curricula. Roles such as the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) provide enhanced opportunities to meld scholars with clinicians through evidence-based research projects. The Integrative Rehabilitation Model, developed by this researcher and based on the Theory of Integral Nursing, provide a framework to form a nurse led collaborative team which has the power to think strategically, inspire commitment, coordinate care, and evaluate processes. Through continued partnership

there are several directions for further studies, such as, a qualitative study to determine patient readiness for integrated services, evidence-based research on improved patient outcomes related to CAT integration, and curricula review and development for integration of CAT.