



Deaf Strong Hospital, 2015

This year's Deaf Strong Hospital event was hosted on Friday, August 28th, 2015. Deaf Strong Hospital (DSH) has been held annually at the URM School of Medicine since 2006. This year, 104 first- year medical students participated in the afternoon-long event. The NCDHR provided training to 30 deaf community members in the morning. Deaf community members were actors instructed to act as hospital staff who have been assigned to treat medical students and their illnesses. These actors rely heavily on role-playing, as the students are given their illness and instructions on where to go prior to entering the "hospital."

DSH is an opportunity to expose medical students to the challenges that deaf people face in the hospital. Most barriers are communication-based; missing their name being called when it's their time to see the doctor, difficulty explaining symptoms or asking questions, and waiting for an interpreter- if there's one available. Actors are instructed to use their native language of ASL and minimize lip-reading and speech communication. This is where the medical students can understand the struggle of being unable to communicate in their own native language in a healthcare setting and become creative with gestures, handwriting, etc.

After the DSH experience, students returned to their assigned homerooms to debrief and share their experiences with two facilitators: one deaf community member and one hearing faculty member. The debriefing is an important part of this experience to allow students to reflect on their challenges, share success stories and consider ways the healthcare system can be improved for those with language and communication barriers. This lesson is often one that stays with them for the rest of their career.

This year was also unique because we held our first ever community debriefing session. This allowed the deaf actors to provide feedback to the NCDHR staff to assist with improvements for years ahead.

Deaf Strong Hospital is an event that has always drawn observers, mostly from the UR and other local colleges who are interested in hosting a similar event. This year, Deaf Strong Hospital had three visitors from the State of Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and one visitor from the University of Southern Mississippi. All visitors have expressed interest in replicating the DSH training program in their communities.

The NCDHR would like to thank our deaf community actors, debriefing facilitators and the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry for their involvement with hosting Deaf Strong Hospital. We look forward to working with you again next year!

[View our slideshow of this year's event! Photo credit to Lorne Farovitch](#)

[Time Warner Cable News Coverage of the 2015 Deaf Strong Hospital](#)

[Learn more about the Deaf Strong Hospital training program](#)



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