Course Title: Long term care/Geriatric Rotation

Course Description and goals:
This is a long-term care rotation designed to educate the student about the medical problems and other issues facing the geriatric population. This rotation can be accomplished in many ways. Most of the students will spend three half-days in a long-term care facility alongside an attending physician and/or PA, residents, nutritionists and pharmacists. They will also be required to present a 20-minute presentation on a common topic encountered in geriatrics. It is possible the long-term care requirement can be met through exposure to the geriatric population during other rotations such as Family Medicine, and in other facilities including nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities. However, this is left to the discretion of the Clinical Coordinator. Upon completion of this rotation the physician assistant student will gather pertinent historical and physical data, obtain indicated lab/imaging studies, assess the results, formulate a management plan and assist in the implementation of the appropriate therapy to the geriatric patient. The student will also gain an awareness of other physical, emotional, cultural, social, economic and spiritual issues specific to the geriatric population.

Method of Evaluation (preceptor evaluation, Typhon, self-evaluation, other)

I. Medical Knowledge
Upon completion of the rotation, the student will demonstrate the ability to evaluate, manage, and educate patients and their families/caregivers about the following geriatric issues:

Objectives:

Geriatric Syndromes

Falls, Mobility and Function

1. Identify the risk factors and causes of gait disturbances, falls and immobility issues in geriatric patients and discuss management, home safety and preventative strategies for each.
2. Discuss specific illnesses or health conditions which may cause a patient to fall
3. Identify barriers to maintaining function and the ability to perform activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs)
4. Give 3 examples each of ADLs and IADLs
5. Discuss conditions requiring bed rest; describe the consequences of bed rest and describe prevention methods for pressure ulcers, iatrogenic infections, etc.
6. Describe the risk factors and consequences of loss of independence
7. Discuss the indications for a formal driving evaluation in a geriatric patient who possesses a current license

Osteoporosis

1. Discuss the etiology, epidemiology, signs and symptoms, pathologic changes, atypical presentations, diagnostic evaluation and management (including pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic) of osteoporosis
2. Differentiate osteoporosis and osteopenia
3. Define and give examples of secondary osteoporosis
4. Describe the risk factors for osteoporosis
5. Outline the current guidelines for osteoporosis screening and BMD

Incontinence

1. Describe the causes, risk factors and consequences of urinary incontinence in both the male and female elderly patient
2. Differentiate the types of urinary incontinence including urge, stress, overflow and mixed.
3. Identify pharmacologic, non-pharmacologic and surgical therapies for urinary incontinence

Nutrition, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

1. Identify risks for malnutrition and dehydration in the geriatric patient
2. Discuss the different etiologies of weight loss and weight gain in the geriatric patient
3. Discuss primary and secondary prevention strategies for disease in geriatric patients, including exercise, nutrition, oral health, immunizations and screening for diseases

Vision and Hearing

1. Discuss the health conditions in which a geriatric patient is vulnerable with untreated hearing and/or vision impairment
2. Describe the causes of visual impairment in the geriatric population
3. Identify the causes of hearing loss in the geriatric population
4. Summarize evaluation methods for visual and hearing impairment
5. Outline management plans for geriatric patients with visual and hearing impairments

Dementia, Delirium and Depression

1. Define dementia, delirium and depression and describe the causes and diagnostic criteria of each
2. Describe the risk factors for dementia, delirium and depression
3. Discuss the progression of dementia
4. Outline pharmacologic, non-pharmacologic and preventative measures for dementia and delirium
5. Describe appropriate treatment of depression in an elderly patient and list antidepressants to avoid in this population

**Other Mental Health Conditions in the Geriatric Patient**

1. Discuss common mental health concerns in the elderly and identify risk factors, etiology, signs and symptoms, differential diagnosis, evaluation and management of the following issues as they pertain to the geriatric patient:
   - Anxiety
   - Panic disorder
   - Sleep disorder
   - Substance abuse

**Other Common Conditions in the Geriatric Patient:**

1. Discuss the normal physiologic changes associated with aging
2. Identify the etiology, epidemiology, signs and symptoms, pathologic changes, atypical presentations, diagnostic evaluation, and management (including pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic) of the following diseases as they pertain to the geriatric patient:
   - Congestive heart failure
   - Temporal arteritis
   - UTI
   - Rheumatoid/Osteoarthritis
   - Cancer
   - Pneumonia
   - CVA/TIA
   - Arrhythmias
   - Dehydration
   - Edema
   - Vision/Hearing loss
   - Weight loss/gain
   - Alzheimer’s disease
   - Fibromyalgia/Chronic pain
   - Benign prostatic hypertrophy
   - Parkinson’s disease
   - Constipation/diarrhea
   - COPD
   - Dizziness/syncope/balance
   - Diabetes mellitus
   - Hyper/hypotension
   - Sexual dysfunction
   - Fractures
   - Hyper/hypocalcemia

**Psychosocial Issues in the Geriatric Patient**

1. Identify and appropriately report elder abuse and neglect
2. Discuss the benefits and consequences of a change from independent living to an assisted living or nursing facility
3. Describe ways in which the geriatric patient can effectively manage economic changes, including finances, insurance issues, estate issues, etc.
4. Discuss the risk factors for social withdrawal in a geriatric patient and identify resources for social support
Pharmacotherapy in the Geriatric Patient

1. Identify medications to avoid in the geriatric population
2. Discuss the risks of polypharmacy and multiple prescribers in the geriatric patient
3. Identify how pharmacokinetics change in the geriatric patient
4. Assess the patient’s ability to self-administer medications; discuss the consequences of memory loss and medications in a geriatric patient, and describe ways to manage this issue

Palliative and End of Life Care

1. Discuss what information is included in a POLST form
2. Define ‘DNR’
3. Recognize and respect different cultural views of death and dying
4. Identify integral team members in the end-of-life care of a geriatric patient
5. Describe who is eligible for hospice care and what is accomplished through hospice
6. Describe the role of care givers and family members in palliative care
7. In patients diagnosed with a terminal illness, identify and repeatedly clarify wishes about end-of-life issues

Caregiver Burden

1. Define caregiver burden
2. Discuss the risk factors for caregiver burden
3. Identify interventions for caregiver burden

II. Patient Care

Students are expected to gather and document essential and accurate information about their geriatric patients, make informed decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, up-to-date scientific evidence and clinical judgment. Students are then expected to develop and carry out management plans that meet the specific needs of the geriatric patient while respecting the heterogeneity of the geriatric population. Upon completion of the rotation, the student should:

1. Obtain an age appropriate medical history
2. Perform an age appropriate physical exam, assessing gait, transfers, balance, mental status (MMSE, clock drawing, etc), muscle strength (including shoulder function), hand dexterity and hearing/vision
3. Perform the following tests to evaluate fall risk: Get Up and Go, Functional Reach, Modified Romberg
4. Perform preventative health measures for the patient, including education on colonoscopy, mammogram, immunizations and other age appropriate screenings
5. Order and interpret appropriate laboratory and imaging studies pertaining to the needs of the geriatric patient.
6. Create patient-centered plans of care which meet the physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural and social needs and expectations of the geriatric patient.

III. Interpersonal & Communication Skills
Students are expected to communicate information respectfully and clearly to geriatric patients, their families and caregivers. This can be accomplished through verbal, nonverbal and written exchange. During the rotation, the student must:
   1. Present an oral presentation to the preceptor which includes pertinent clinical information about the patient.
   2. Perform thorough written documentation of the patient history, diagnoses, assessment, treatment plan and follow up instructions.
   3. Communicate information clearly and educate the patient, the patient’s family and the patient’s caregiver about patient diagnoses and treatment plan and any follow up necessary.

IV. Professionalism
Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism at all times during interactions with geriatric patients, families and caregivers, recognizing that the needs of geriatric patients differ from other patients. During the rotation, the student must:
   1. Demonstrate an appropriate level of professionalism when interacting with the geriatric patient, their families, their caregivers and other health professionals.
   2. Deliver care to patients with dignity, respect and compassion.
   3. Demonstrate accountability to the health needs of geriatric patients and always act in their best interest.
   4. Respect the heterogeneity of the geriatric population and recognize each patient as an individual regardless of their age.
   5. Define ageism and describe how it can negatively impact the health care delivered to geriatric patients.
   6. Identify the prejudices and stereotypes facing the geriatric population and methods to overcome them.
   7. Recognize and appreciate the importance of self-worth and optimal function in this population.

V. Practice-Based Learning and Improvement
Practice-based learning and improvement focuses on analyzing one’s own clinical practice, and seeking medical literature and other information resources for the purpose of self-improvement. Students are expected to:
1. Locate, interpret and evaluate medical literature which pertains to the current standards of clinical practice for conditions encountered in the geriatric population
2. Apply up-to-date evidence-based medicine principles to care for geriatric patients

Suggested Reading List:
The following online texts and textbooks may be useful:

VI. System-Based Practice
Students must be aware of the societal and economic environments in which health care is delivered. During the rotation, the student must:
1. Promote a safe environment for patient care including in the inpatient, outpatient and home setting
2. Promote cost-effective health care without sacrificing the quality of patient care
3. Promote the continuity of care among multiple health care professionals in the care of the geriatric patient, including physicians, PAs, nurses, physical, occupational and speech therapists, dieticians and social workers
4. Incorporate community services and institutional resources in the care of the geriatric patient