



Unitek 2020 Conference: Education Evolution and Transforming the New Normal

Renowned physicians, nurse legends, and inspirational leaders collaborated to build a better future at Unitek's virtual conference.

Newport Beach, California – December 9, 2020 – On November 6, 2020, Unitek hosted their fifth annual conference with world-renowned physician, director, and comedian Dr. Zubin Damania as the keynote speaker. Nursing theorist and Pioneer Dr. Patricia Benner also led the event with her expertise and impact on the nursing profession. This year, the theme was **“Education Evolution: Transforming the New Normal.”** The virtual event focused on how to achieve teaching excellence amidst global change.

Over 1,000 people attended the conference, including healthcare leaders, clinical partners, and educators. During the event, participants learned how to prepare for the next evolution in healthcare and education delivery. Some key points included the detriments of waiting for change, transformations in academia, and new practice and teaching patterns due to COVID-19. Despite the current state of the world, healthcare and academic communities joined forces to ensure the success of the conference.

This trailblazing event featured speakers and panelists who are experts in their field, including: Keynote Speaker Dr. **Zubin Damania** – Physician, Director, and Comedian; Dr. **Patricia Benner** – Chief Faculty Development Officer for EducatingNurses.com; Dr. **Dale E. Beatty** – Vice President of Patient Care Service and Chief Nursing Officer at Stanford Health Care; Dr. **Jim D’Alfonso** – Regional Executive Director of Professional Excellence for Kaiser Permanente in Northern California and Founding Executive Director of the KP Scholars Academy; Dr. **Garrett Chan** – President and CEO of HealthImpact; Dr. **KT Waxman** – Executive Director of the California Simulation Alliance, national nurse leader, and executive with extensive experience in healthcare and corporate settings; Dr. **Anitra Williams** – Director of Nursing Operations at Dignity Health’s, St. Joseph’s Medical Center in Stockton and the 2020 President of the Association of California Nurse Leaders (ACNL); and Dr. **Sharon Goldfarb** – President of the California Organization of Associate Degree Nurses (COADN), Director at (OADN), and the Dean of Health Science at the College of Marin.

In the afternoon, breakout sessions were led by Dr. **Timothy Porter O’Grady** – Inspirational leader in healthcare and nursing; **Blake Lynch** – Renowned nurse educator and comedian; Dr. **Jeffery Hudson-Covolo** – Chief Nurse Executive and Vice President of Patient Care Services for Sierra View Medical Center; **Terron Arbon, MSN, RN, CNE** – Chief Nursing Officer at Jordan Valley Medical Center, Jordan Valley Center - West Valley and Campus Mountain Point Medical Center; **Kathy Owens, RN, MSN, CNE** – Senior Vice President of Clinical Services at Avalon Health Care, Inc.; Dr. **Cara Rigby** – Nurse Educator-Integration Specialist at ATI Nursing Education; and Dr. **Maria D’Errico** – Nurse Educator at UbiSim, an immersive VR simulation platform dedicated to nursing education.

“The ultimate goal of these innovative speakers is one that Unitek shares: To elevate healthcare reform through academia and practice collaboration and become change agents on a global scale,” said Dr. Abdel Yosef, PhD, RN, CNE, Chief Academic Officer at Unitek Learning. “Before and during COVID-19, we realized that we must do more to integrate technology into our core mission. A virtual platform has enabled us to get thousands of students across the finish line.”

Active innovative in online teaching should become central to the mission of every educational institution.”

At the conference, executive nursing and allied health educators discussed how to achieve teaching excellence. Each panelist demonstrated how to transform the new normal during this education evolution. One key topic revolved around the development of virtual reality simulations as well as their integration into nursing curriculums worldwide. Concurrent sessions took place after lunch, with presentations by Unitek Learning’s academic members as well as several community partners and sponsors of the event. The organizers also presented a touching tribute to healthcare leaders and clinical partners. By 4:30 pm, the conference concluded with closing remarks from Dr. Yosef.

“We were honored to host such innovative and inspirational thought leaders like Dr. Damania, Dr. Benner, and Dr. Porter-O’Grady. Together, they bridged the gap between healthcare and education,” said Janis Paulson, Chief Executive Officer at Unitek Learning. “At Unitek, we will continue to incorporate new innovative approaches as we expand our educational offerings. In order for us to prepare future nurses, we must continue to evolve and combine new perspectives, teaching approaches, and cutting-edge technologies.”

Unitek Learning is the parent company of several distinguished learning institutions: Unitek College, Unitek EMT, Eagle Gate College, Provo College, and Brookline College. Unitek programs teach the clinical practices and theory used in the field today. Equipped with a multitude of sought-after skills, Unitek graduates are prepared to excel in many of the fastest-growing careers in healthcare and nursing.

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