

The feeling is mutual

by Barb Schlaefer

“Melissa has an amazing amount of energy and skill in education, interprofessional education specifically. I enjoy the collaboration with midwifery education as much as I do on the clinical level,”

said Professor Phillip Rauk, MD, director of the OB/GYN residency program at the University of Minnesota of his collaborating partner, Melissa Avery, PhD, CNM, FACNM, FAAN, who leads the Doctor of Nursing Practice specialty in nurse-midwifery at the School of Nursing.

Rauk and Avery are working together to create a new curriculum including team-based simulation experiences designed to give their learners a deeper understanding and respect for one another’s capabilities. Their objective is to prepare new nurse-midwives and OB/GYN physicians to work together in ways that complement each profession’s strengths.

“We have so much fun working together,” said Avery. “Phillip is so enthusiastic and together we’re able to



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come up with new and creative ways to help our learners understand the value of both professions and learn how they can work together to achieve the best outcomes for women and newborns.”

Minnesota is one of four demonstration sites nationally advancing this interprofessional model of education and clinical care. As a former president of the American College of Nurse-Midwives, Avery is co-leading this initiative with John J. Jennings, MD, a past president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Texas Tech University.

The pair is charged with developing new interprofessional standards for national accreditation metrics for the two professional programs. The ultimate goal is to increase the number of nurse-midwifery graduates to address a projected maternity care provider shortage, improve outcomes and reduce costs in maternity care.

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