



Unitek 2020 Conference: Education Evolution and Transforming the New Normal

Renowned Physician Dr. Zubin Damania, Nurse Legend Dr. Patricia Benner, and Inspirational Leader Dr. Tim Porter-O'Grady to Speak at the Conference

Newport Beach, California – September 29, 2020 – Unitek Learning is thrilled to announce that on November 6, 2020, world-renowned physician, director, and comedian Dr. Zubin Damania, MD, will serve as keynote speaker at the Fifth Annual Unitek Conference. Pioneer Dr. Patricia Benner will also lead the event with her expertise and impact on the nursing profession. This year, the theme is **“Education Evolution: Transforming the New Normal.”** The virtual event will focus on how to achieve teaching excellence amidst global change.

In previous years, Unitek has emphasized innovation in education and healthcare, infusing caring into teaching and learning, and building a strong partnership between academic and healthcare. This year, the conference will prepare for the next evolution in healthcare and education delivery. Some key points include the detriments of waiting for change, transformations in academia, and new practice and teaching patterns due to COVID-19.

Keynote speaker Zubin Damania, M.D. will demonstrate how to leverage humor during challenging times. Dr. Damania is the Director of Healthcare Development for Downtown Project Las Vegas. During his 10-year hospitalist career at Stanford, he received the Russell Lee Award for Clinical Teaching while maintaining a second career performing stand-up comedy for medical audiences worldwide.

Dr. Patricia Benner is a highly influential figure in the healthcare field. She has shaped the nursing profession with her *Novice to Expert* theory. It introduced the concept that expert nurses develop skills and understanding of patient care over time through a sound educational base in addition to various experiences. As the primary researcher and author of *Educating Nurses: A Call for Radical Transformation*, Dr. Benner addressed the need to transform nursing education using innovative approaches to decrease the academic-practice gap. 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.

“This principle holds true for faculty as well,” said Dr. Abdel Yosef, PhD, RN, CNE, Chief Academic Officer at Unitek Learning. “In order for educators to effectively prepare students, they must transform their approach to teaching and learning. Among other concepts, our goal at this conference is to explore how the ‘new normal’ will challenge education.”

At the conference, executive nursing and allied health educators will discuss how to achieve teaching excellence. Some of these esteemed speakers and workshop facilitators include nurse legend Dr. Patricia Benner, PhD, RN, FAAN, FRCN; inspirational leader Dr. Tim Porter-O'Grady, RN, DM, EdD, ScD(h), FAAN; and comedian Nurse Blake Lynch, RN. Each panelist will demonstrate how to transform the new normal during this education evolution.

The virtual event will begin at 8:30 am PST. Unitek’s leadership team will provide a warm welcome to participants from academia, healthcare, and the extended community. Afterwards, Dr. Damania will deliver his keynote address. A panel discussion led by Dr. Benner will follow the keynote address. Executive officers from various medical systems will join her to discuss how this education and healthcare evolution can shape the future.

Concurrent sessions will take place after lunch, with presentations by Unitek Learning's academic members as well as several community partners and sponsors of the event. Dr. Porter-O'Grady will lead a panel in the afternoon, where he will discuss the merits of the [Next Generation NCLEX Project](#). The conference will conclude by 4:30 pm with closing remarks from Dr. Yosef.

"We are honored to host such innovative and inspirational thought leaders like Dr. Damania, Dr. Benner, and Dr. Porter-O'Grady. Together, they bridge the gap between healthcare and education," said Janis Paulson, Chief Executive Officer at Unitek Learning. "At Unitek, we believe in the importance of teaching excellence to prepare for the next stage of healthcare delivery. Academic transformation is needed to help set the course for the future *and* improve student learning experiences."

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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