

# MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS EDUCATION TRACK IMPROVES SELF-RATED COMPETENCIES IN PHYSICAL THERAPY STUDENTS

P Plummer<sup>1</sup>, A Rosenberg<sup>1</sup>, A Williams<sup>1</sup>, C Bohling<sup>1</sup>, H Eustis<sup>1</sup>, J Miller<sup>1</sup>, D Meyer<sup>2</sup>, K Gooch<sup>3</sup>, L Johnston<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Division of Physical Therapy, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC; <sup>2</sup>UNC Health Care, Chapel Hill, NC; <sup>3</sup>National MS Society, Greater Carolinas Chapter, Raleigh, NC

## INTRODUCTION

**Multiple Sclerosis Standardized Training and Education Program with University Partners (MS STEP UP) is a collaboration between:**

- The University of North Carolina Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT) program
- The Greater Carolinas National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS) Chapter

**MS STEP UP Main Goals:**

- Educate and mentor DPT students to become MS-Certified Specialists
- Provide specialized physical therapy services to MS populations locally and nationally

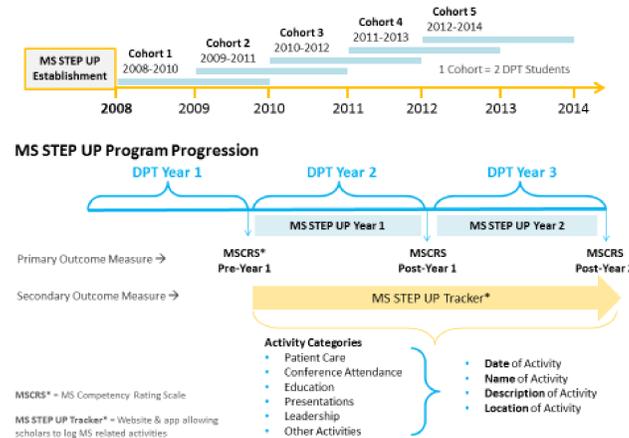
## OBJECTIVES

**To evaluate the outcomes of the first 5 cohorts of MS STEP UP scholars using:**

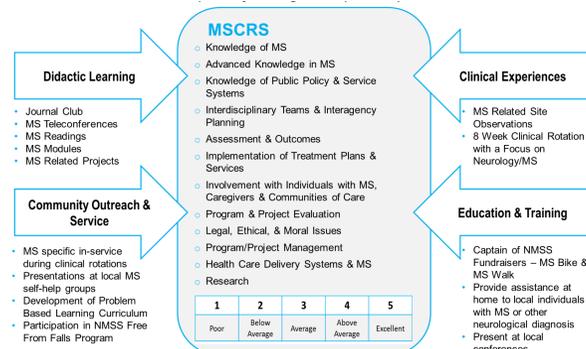
- MS Competencies Rating Scale (MSCRS) scores
- MS STEP UP Online Activity Tracker data

## METHODS

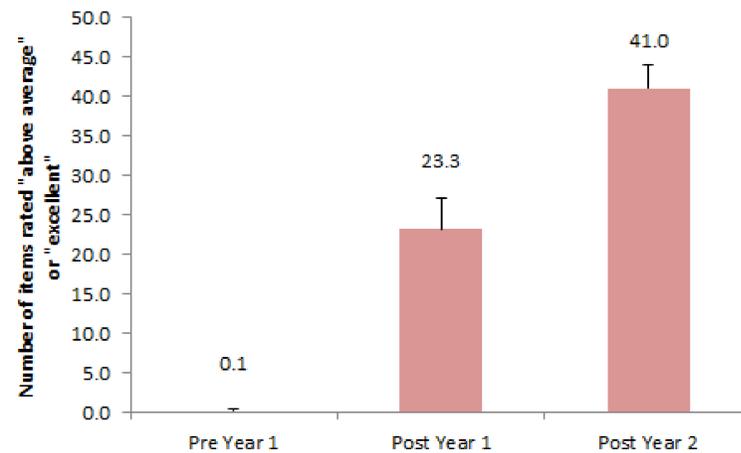
**Figure 1: MS STEP UP program overview**



**Figure 2: MSCRS and associated activities**



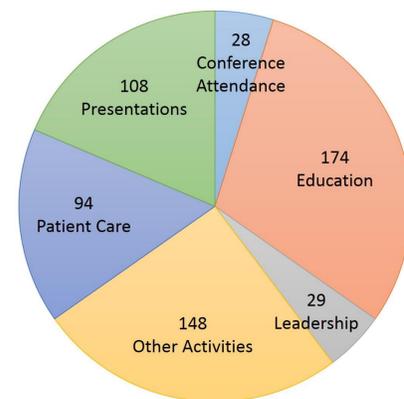
## RESULTS AND OUTCOMES



**Figure 3: Number of MSCRS items rated as "above average" or "excellent" (max. 44 items) at each time point**

The number of competency items on which the scholars rated their knowledge as "above average" or "excellent" increased significantly ( $p < .001$ ) from a mean ( $\pm$ SD) of  $0.13 \pm 0.35$  items (0%) at baseline to  $23.3 \pm 3.8$  items (53%) after the first year, and  $41.0 \pm 3.1$  items (93%) after the second year

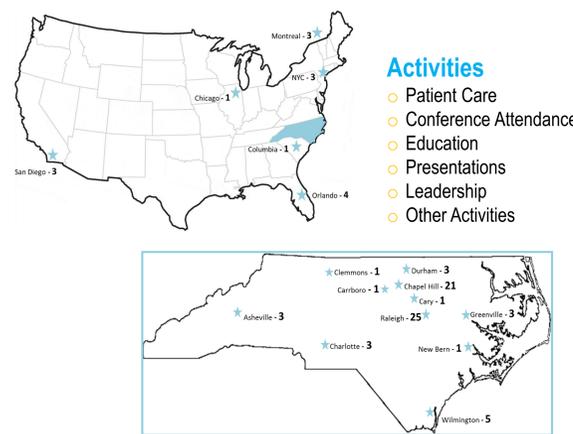
**Figure 4: MS STEP UP scholar activities**



ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES
Education	Training/Certification for Bioness L300 Foot Drop System, Parkinson's Screening Day
Leadership	MS VLT Meeting, MS interest meeting for DPT students interested in MS STEP UP
Conference Attendance	APTA Combined Sections Meeting, CMC Annual Meeting
Presentations	Managing MS Through Physical Therapy, Yoga for MS Inservice, UNC PT Rounds,
Other Activities	Participation in 2011 Walk MS, MS Scholar Interviews, MS Mud Run,

**Note:** These data are self-reported by scholars using an online tracking tool and should be considered estimates only of the number of activities in each category.

**Figure 5: Location and number of activities of first 10 scholar graduates**



**Note:** Data based on MS STEP UP Tracker self-reported data

## SUMMARY

**Findings:**

- Student-rated MS competencies increase across all competency categories
- MS STEP UP scholars have a sizeable impact on the MS community through various activities

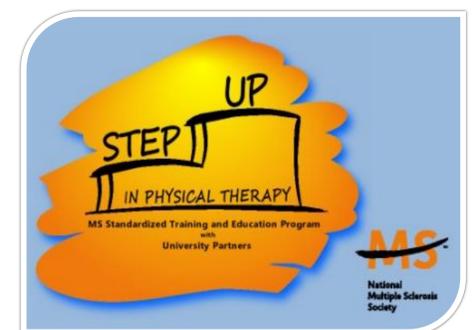
**In conclusion:**

- MS STEP UP improves the clinical skills and knowledge of DPT students
- MS STEP UP adequately prepares graduates to become certified specialists in MS
- MS patient care will most likely benefit from the national expansion of MS STEP UP among DPT programs
- Future research should evaluate the effects of specialized training for therapists and students on patient outcomes



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the National MS Society, Greater Carolinas Chapter and the UNC Division of Physical Therapy for their support of the program.



- Since 2008, 10 DPT students have completed MS STEP UP, and 4 of the first 6 have obtained the MS Certified Specialist (MSCS) certification
- There were significant increases in the number of MSCRS competency items on which scholars rated their knowledge as "above average" or excellent" in self-rated MS competencies across the two years. (Figure 3)
- Scholars participate in a range of educational and clinical activities as part of their individual training (Figure 4)
- MS STEP UP scholars have impacted the Greater Carolinas National MS Society Region in addition to several locations throughout the United States and Canada (Figure 5)