

The Leadership Forum



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Reflections from the Winter Summit Keeping the Education Mission Alive

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As financial pressures grow on general internal medicine divisions, it can be challenging to maintain a focus on the educational mission when it does not generate the all-important RVU based clinical revenue. But as in academic divisions, it is frequently the faculty in general internal medicine who provides the leadership for graduate and undergraduate medical education—as program and clerkship directors, key clinical faculty, and leaders for clinical/basic science integration and for hospital programs in quality and patient safety. The following is a brief review of current trends and opportunities that can help support these educational roles:

1. The CLER (Clinical Learning Environment Review) of the ACGME. This review can be used to increase hospital administration awareness of the unique and critical role that residents and teaching faculty play in patient care and quality. If used effectively, the CLER visit and outcomes may be used to

negotiate new resources to support residency training. The VA is already a leader in this area with the chief resident in Quality and Patient Safety programs. This year-long program includes a structured national curriculum and group projects along with local mentorship from VA experts in Quality and Patient Safety. There are currently 81 positions at 51 VA medical centers.

2. Federally funded programs to expand residency training positions in primary care. The HRSA-funded Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program and the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA) are funding 1,500 new residency training slots in internal medicine, geriatrics, family medicine and psychiatry.
3. Faculty Development. The presentation shared examples of three (3) faculty development programs targeting clinician

researchers, medical educators, and clinical leaders that were done for a minimal investment using institutional resources. The research and education scholars programs targeted junior faculty and the clinical leaders program included both clinicians and administrators. All were well received and lead to increased grant funding, publications, and faculty/administrator satisfaction.

Education, including the training of residents and students, and faculty development are important missions for general internal medicine. Resources are limited, but chiefs and leaders can be strategic in leveraging several ongoing trends and opportunities to ensure that education stays alive and relevant; these include national trends in accreditation, partnering with VA leaders, expanding the primary care and geriatric workforce, growing leaders in quality and patient safety, continuing national advocacy, and supporting junior and mid career faculty already present within institutions.