

SGIM Supports the Primary Care Project

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I am very pleased to announce that the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) and Association of Chiefs and Leaders of General Internal Medicine (ACLGIM) are supporting Primary Care Progress¹ (PCP) in its recently launched campaign to unify nationwide efforts to revitalize the primary care workforce pipeline through the Primary Care Project.²

PCP is an organization that shares our mission to improve primary care research and practice as well as primary care training. The organization was founded in 2009 by Andrew Morris-Singer, MD, in reaction to the announcement that Harvard Medical School planned to defund its Primary Care Division. This sparked the formation of a grassroots organization of students, residents, fellows, and faculty in all disciplines participating in primary care to protect the division and promote innovation in primary care practice and training. The spark caught fire, and the effort has now spread to more than 35 institutions across the country.

In October 2013, PCP launched the Primary Care Project to connect various local initiatives to advance primary care in academic settings and energize those working on the “front lines” of the growing primary care movement. They implemented a two-pronged approach: 1) to promote exchange of ideas, experiences, and resources to advance reforms in primary care education and training in the United States by launching a website showcasing recent promising initiatives and 2) to demonstrate strong national support for revitalizing the primary care pipeline by creating a primary care pledge, or statement of support, that can be signed online by supporters.

The primary care pledge currently has almost 2,200 signatures, with a

goal of 5,000 signatures. The primary care pledge is already acting as a “conversation starter” in local academic communities, fostering the engagement of a diverse coalition of stakeholders with a vested interest in this issue. For example, the PCP chapter at the University of Nebraska organized numerous educational events around interprofessional education and health care reform during National Primary Care Week. The student-led efforts resulted in hundreds of signatures pledging support for the campaign and identified primary care supporters in the student body, administration, and faculty. Chapter members will draw upon these supporters as they further their goal of greater interprofessional collaboration at the university. Similarly, at the University of Utah, the interprofessional PCP chapter adopted a strategy that combined public events, such as a well-attended interprofessional panel and “one-on-one” meetings to introduce the pledge and encourage participants to become active in the revitalization of primary care. Their combined efforts built the framework for a diverse coalition of supporters of primary care reform at their institution.

PCP chapters are comprised of students and faculty from all disciplines engaged in primary care. Chapters may be led by pharmacists, physician assistants, medical students, residents, and/or fellows. These interprofessional groups unite their perspectives, networks, and expertise to create fresh ideas and push the movement forward.

Whether the local goal is transforming primary care delivery in academic practices, reforming education to incorporate competencies of advanced models of primary care, establishing interprofessional learning opportuni-

ties, or changing admissions policies, the organization brings together an engaged group of diverse individuals with aligned goals.

As organizations also committed to revitalizing and promoting high-value primary care with an increased focus on interprofessional teamwork, SGIM and ACLGIM are excited to support the Primary Care Project. SGIM and ACLGIM encourage their members to visit the Primary Care Project website and consider signing the pledge. Additionally, SGIM and ACLGIM encourage members to get further involved in the campaign by sharing their work advancing primary care on the website or by contributing to efforts led by local PCP chapters (or by helping to start a new chapter!). Together, the primary care community has more power to achieve its policy, reimbursement, and educational goals when all members of the community are united and engaged, which is why it is imperative that SGIM and ACLGIM members support this movement.

We believe this partnership with PCP will continue to build the leadership capacity within the general internal medicine community, especially among the next generation of clinicians. We can work together to recruit more budding general internists, improve training in primary care, and advance primary care models promoting high-value care. We hope you will sign the pledge, and we look forward to many of you participating in these exciting efforts to revitalize primary care moving forward.

References

1. <http://primarycareprogress.org/home>
2. <http://theprimarycareproject.org>