

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCIES
TO ACHIEVE A “JUST SYSTEM OF CARE”

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What knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors do we at SGIM have (or need) to move us closer to our vision? For me, this remains an open question. I'm using this column to stimulate a discussion to contemplate what are SGIM's core competencies, what we may need to develop them, and how to incorporate them in our work.



What organizational core competencies do we need to achieve our vision of a “just system of care”? What knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors do we at SGIM have (or need) to move us closer to our vision? For me, this remains an open question. I'm using this column to stimulate a discussion to contemplate what are SGIM's core competencies, what we may need to develop them, and how to incorporate them in our work. This year, council and leaders within SGIM have done a lot of introspection on how we achieve our vision of a just system of care in which everyone can achieve optimal health. We have used this time to think deeply about our organizational vision, mission, and values (why we exist); have set four strategic goals (*what* we need to do to achieve our mission) and continue to work on *how* we can achieve our goals. This feels like the right time to also consider our core competencies.

We need to think about what we as an organization need to do on an ongoing and systemic basis that enables us to achieve our mission. In this context, *organizational competencies* are the combination of required skills, necessary information, appropriate performance measures, and the organizational culture needed to achieve our mission and move us closer to our ultimate vision of a just system of care in which all people can achieve optimal health. We need to identify what SGIM already does well, and what organizational competencies we may need to develop.

In thinking about this, I looked at a variety of sources, most of which dealt with individual skills and abilities, but may provide food for thought as we contemplate organizational competencies. There are many other definitions and models that you may be familiar with and

would consider, and I ask you please to share those and your thoughts about them with us.

We are all familiar with the well-developed individual core competencies in clinical skills in general internal medicine with further differentiation by practice setting. These competencies can be used to guide the development of learning objectives, evaluation methods, and curricula for training programs. SGIM has an *outstanding* suite of career development programs in leadership, education, and health policy that offer unique experiences for members to gain important skills that will help us advance our vision of a just health system for all. Certainly, SGIM's career development programs are considering the full breadth of individual professional core competencies and how they align across different career development stages and trajectories for academic general internists.

In the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars National Leadership Program, we consider competencies in equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) as integral to developing change leaders for the future. We have an integrated set of leadership and EDI competencies and use a framework that includes domains in the personal, interpersonal, internal organizational leadership and organizational/community impact. Some of the EDI competencies include the following:

- **commitment to diversity and inclusion,**
- **social justice,**
- **building capacity to advance health equity,**
- **practice multiculturalism,**
- **fostering diversity and inclusion, and**
- **social determinants of health and advocacy.**

The IOM report on Health Professional Education Summit articulated “Core Competencies Needed for

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Health Care Professionals”¹ that would be required for a redesign of our health system to meet the current challenges we face as a profession. The report suggests that all health professionals should possess the following core competencies to meet the needs of the 21st-century healthcare system: provide patient-centered care, work in interdisciplinary teams, employ evidence-based practice, apply quality improvement, and utilize informatics.

I offer these examples to start a conversation about how we can embed the concept of core competencies in our collective work to move us steadily closer to our vision of a just system of care that allows everyone to achieve optimal health. As you think about our career development offerings, annual and regional meetings, and other programs and initiatives, I would love to hear your thoughts on organizational core competencies that would allow us to move together to achieve SGIM's vision.

References

1. Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on the Health Professions Education Summit; Greiner AC, Knebel E, editors. Health Professions Education: A Bridge to Quality. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2003. Chapter 3, The Core Competencies Needed for Health Care Professionals. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK221519/>. Accessed October 1, 2018.

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