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Developing a Formal Pathway for Clinician-Educator Training in Residency

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To the Editor: Participating in medical education is a fundamental part of residency training. Although residents may spend up to 25% of their time performing teaching activities, most programs lack a dedicated curriculum to instruct residents on how to teach, and even fewer programs offer specialized training to those who seek further expertise in medical education. As second-year residents, already intent on weaving academic medicine into our careers, we developed a career pathway for motivated residents interested in formal medical education training. Conceived as a 2-year longitudinal curriculum, residents would be provided didactic training in curriculum design, mentoring, academic coaching, leadership skills, and academic administrative tasks. Residents would also lead hands-on experiential teaching activities, complete a scholarly project, and be assigned a mentor to help develop an academic portfolio and set career goals.

Proposing, developing, and enacting a curricular change of this magnitude as second-year residents was an extraordinarily challenging, yet empowering experience. With strong support and guidance from our program leadership, we were afforded the opportunity to develop this pathway from scratch, identify the relevant stakeholders and present our proposal, respond to critical feedback and adapt to institutional and program limitations, and be actively involved in implementing the final product.

As with nearly all aspects of health care, we, too, were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We faced delays in developing key didactic and experiential components, and were forced to postpone the inaugural class of the pathway by a year. Our program administration was appropriately focused on mitigating the challenges that the pandemic brought upon residency training. However, we used this time to further develop our skills, completing the Association for Medical Education in Europe Essential Skills in Medical Education course and participating in a
number of teaching activities. By redirecting our focus toward our own professional
development, we gained new perspective and knowledge that would aid in further amplifying the
burgeoning pathway.

Finally, in April 2021, the first cohort of the Medical Educator Pathway completed the dedicated
medical educator elective, a rigorous and predominantly hands-on, 2-week workshop focused on
curriculum design, leadership training, and academic coaching. To say it was immensely
satisfying to see this project finally come to fruition is an understatement. We are excited by the
early success, but await the true dividends of having been a catalyst for developing well-trained
and passionate clinician-educators.

Reference

1. Post RE, Quattlebaum RG, Benich JJ III. Residents-as-teachers curricula: A critical