

The Endocrine Advocacy Project

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Keywords:	advocacy, resident teaching, Health Advocate, Collaborator

The objective of this project is to teach residents through a unique experience that patient advocacy is doable and rewarding for doctors and patients.

A 2-week block at the beginning of the fifth postgraduate year is devoted to this project. Residents work as a team and collaborate with other health care workers (pharmacists, social workers and nurses) as required. Residents research, design and implement the project with input from their faculty supervisor. They then communicate their results to stakeholders. The faculty supervisor has the ultimate responsibility to ensure the project advocates for and effects change for patients' health.

The three completed projects are as follows:

1. "Diabetes is Expensive" is a brochure for patients with diabetes describing sources of funding for diabetes management,
2. "Optimization of Inpatient Levothyroxine Administration: an Advocacy Project" provides pharmacist education on inpatient prescription of L-thyroxine, and
3. "Screening for Neuropathy in Patients with Diabetes and Mental Illness" is for psychiatric nurses taking care of patients with severe schizophrenia.

Informal feedback from residents, pharmacists, nurses and patients so far has been very positive. Formal feedback from residents will be presented.

In conclusion, this modality for teaching the advocacy role (among other roles) has been successful in our program. The main challenge has been maintaining the momentum for change after the end of each project.