

Introduction of a health advocacy module into an emergency curriculum

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The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada has developed 7 CanMEDS Roles that are required of all specialists. One of these is the Health Advocate Role. This is a Role that many specialties have found challenging to incorporate into their curriculum in a formalized manner. This review showcases the strategies successfully used by one program to develop a health advocacy module and build this into the core curriculum.

Strategies included identification of a lead person to champion this Role and introduction of a Health Advocacy Day into the curriculum. The Health Advocacy Day included the following:

- grand rounds from a high profile speaker on health advocacy initiatives in the emergency department;
- an introduction to health advocacy session that discussed determinants of health and basic principles of health advocacy;
- a video of high profile health advocates in the community;
- interactive games;
- local guest speakers who presented on different health advocacy programs within the department; and
- a workshop to develop a residents' advocacy project.

A health advocacy project was initiated and developed by the residents in the program. Another strategy was to make the Health Advocate Role more visible and explicit in the program; this was accomplished by labeling the Health Advocate Role on the rounds schedule where applicable. Faculty were more explicit in highlighting this Role when referrals were made in the emergency department. Assessment of the Health Advocacy Role was performed by developing an objective structured clinical examination station on Health Advocacy and by evaluating this Role on the in-training evaluation report.

This innovative approach has raised the profile of health advocacy and successfully incorporated it into the core curriculum.

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