

Implementation of a portfolio-based evaluation process for residents in community medicine

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Planning and implementation of a new portfolio-based evaluation program for residents in Community Medicine was recently completed at the University of Alberta to complement existing evaluation methods.

The planning process began with identifying the involved parties and their perceived interests/needs in portfolio-based resident evaluation. The risks and benefits of a portfolio-based evaluation process were weighed for each group. Key questions left to be answered included the following: what content should be included in the portfolio, who should evaluate the content, when should it be evaluated, how should it be recorded and how should the content be assessed? To address these questions, the 2 key groups, the residents in the Community Medicine program and the specialist preceptors, were engaged at separate meetings. At each of these meetings, agreement on these questions was reached by consensus.

The portfolio evaluation program was implemented in time for the 2010/2011 residency year. No extra program resources were required. The content, process and evaluation metrics were implemented according to the consensus of the groups. The portfolio content successfully matched both the rotational learning activities outlined in the Residency Program Handbook and CanMEDS objectives for training in Community Medicine.

Evaluation of the program is ongoing. Portfolio-based evaluation is appropriate for the project-based, long-term residency rotations that are prevalent in Community Medicine. With appropriate communication and involvement of key stakeholders, new evaluation methods can be easily and quickly implemented in existing programs.