

How medical students spearheaded an entrepreneurship curriculum

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Brendan Murphy

Senior News Writer

Medical students have a strong desire to understand industry and creation, but it's not necessarily part of the curriculum. Students at Rutgers University Robert Wood Johnson Medical School have created a biomedical entrepreneurship network and corresponding medical school curriculum and noncredit elective aimed at offering insight on those topics.

Information on the course and its implementation was presented during the most recent ChangeMedEd® conference. Here's a look at some of the key lessons for medical students looking to implement a similar curriculum.

Making it work within a school setting

Creating a student-driven elective, much like a faculty-driven one, requires curricular review. To do that, the students driving the process needed to check a few boxes. First, the elective needed to meet the six schoolwide objectives of professionalism, medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, practice-based learning and improvement, systems-based practice, and patient care.

As a member school of the AMA Accelerating Change in Medical Education Consortium, Rutgers also wanted to ensure that the course was focused on health systems science.

From a faculty perspective, it's imperative to give medical students the right leeway to help develop the curriculum.

"We want to ensure that we provide the support that is needed to enable their tenacity to make things happen and provide a comfortable and safe space to try," said Paul Weber, MD, the associate dean of

continuing medical education at Rutgers.

Find out why medical students can succeed as entrepreneurs.

The basics of entrepreneurship

The fall lessons of the yearlong elective revolved around current events.

“The world of health care is ever-shifting,” said Charles Levin, a Rutgers medical student who was part of the group that created the course. “New opportunities are constantly arising, as we saw during COVID. The health care systems were forced to restructure how they delivered care and it also propelled the rapid development of diagnostic technologies.”

Many of the key tenets of entrepreneurship come up throughout the course. Some of the key lessons include:

- Market need and creative ideation.
- Idea development and building your network.
- Financing and funding.
- Protection and Marketing.

The elective began in July 2021, and it is the hope to expand its reach by capturing student feedback.

“Eventually we would like to include it in our school’s curriculum based on our school’s experience with this course,” said Aditi Gore, a medical student who co-founded the course.

Learn about three big ideas to improve diversity in medical education.

Rutgers’ work with the Consortium

Rutgers’ initial work with AMA Consortium was aimed at maximizing integrated care delivery through interprofessional learner teams. To do that, the school deployed medical students and other health professions learners on care coordination teams of an accountable care organization (ACO) to augment patient care and maximize integrated care delivery at home. The school subsequently received additional grant funding from the AMA for an innovation project: Implementation of teamwork and leadership training among the residents and interprofessionals working in a critical care unit.