

How a new three-year curriculum is producing primary care physicians

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A Spotlight on Innovation post by Tonya Fancher, MD, program director and associate professor in the department of internal medicine at the University of California Davis School of Medicine. This appeared in the January 2015 edition of AMA MedEd Update, a monthly medical education newsletter.

Our nation faces an urgent need for more and better-trained primary care physicians to meet society's healthcare needs. Fewer than one-third of California counties have enough primary care physicians to

satisfy demand.



The University of California Davis School of Medicine's new three-year program to produce primary care physicians was featured on a local Sacramento news station. Click to watch the video.

To address this crisis, the University of California Davis School of Medicine and Kaiser Permanente Northern California developed the Accelerated Competency-based Education in Primary Care (ACE-PC) Program, a three-year medical school pathway for students committed to primary care careers. After completing school in three years, ACE-PC students gain conditional acceptance into a Kaiser Permanente or UC Davis primary care residency program.

Prior to joining the school's traditional curriculum, ACE-PC students complete a six-week summer immersion course focused on team-based care, basic doctoring skills and clinical reasoning. They also begin a longitudinal primary care clinic under the supervision of a Kaiser Permanente physician mentor, in which they manage a panel of patients over a period of three years. In the summer following the first year, each student will complete a primary care clerkship in either a KP or UC Davis primary care residency clinic. The ACE-PC clerkship year will be a longitudinal integrated clerkship emphasizing outpatient practice and continuity of learning sites, teachers and mentors.

The ACE-PC program launched in June with a diverse cohort of six students, many from communities underrepresented in medicine. UC Davis matriculates the most diverse medical student body in California, with more than 40 percent of the Class of 2016 coming from such communities.

The innovative program has sparked important changes within UC Davis and beyond, including the passage of California Assembly Bill 1838 in July. This new law allows allopathic and osteopathic students who graduate in less than four years from programs approved by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (such as ACE-PC students) to qualify for a California medical license. The legislation was initiated by our team and co-sponsored by the UC Office of the President and the California Medical Board.

The program is funded through the AMA's Accelerating Change in Medical Education initiative, which provided 11 U.S. medical schools with \$1 million grants to reshape the way physicians are trained in order to improve health care. The ACE-PC program is the sole project focused on accelerating primary care training and preparing physicians for 21st century practice within an integrated health system.

Future plans include development of accelerated training programs in other workforce shortage areas such as general surgery and psychiatry.

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