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Enhancing Medical Student Global Health Service and Learning Opportunities

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Background

- Increasing medical student interest in global health
- Participation may be correlated with future careers in primary care
- Most opportunities focus on M1/M2 students via summer HOMBRE brigades
- Schedule limits participation of M3/M4 students
- Typical number of M3/M4 students on brigades prior to 2016 = 1-2 max per academic year

Objectives

- Respond to student interest
- Develop elective course offerings to leverage existing brigades
- Increase participation of M3/M4 students in global health service and learning opportunities
- Promote appropriate student preparation



Methods

- New M3/M4 global health electives (GHE) connected with brigades to Honduras (3x/year) and Dominican Republic (2x/year)
- Online GHE applications
- Online brigade-specific applications
- Participant screening interviews
- Formalized brigade preparation
- Standardized approval for GHE enrollment
- Clinical experience structured via brigades
- Online GHE evaluation post-travel



Photo courtesy of Mark Ryan, MD

Outcomes to Date (2016-2017)

- 19 GHE applications submitted
- 14 M3/M4 students enrolled in GHEs and traveled on related brigades
- M3/M4 students readily incorporated into existing brigades
- 7 applications pending for 2017-2018 travel



Photo courtesy of Steve Crossman, MD

Anonymous Student Feedback

- 11 responses representing 5 brigades
- Brigades and GHEs seen as well organized
- All respondents said they would go on another brigade or recommend to others
- Impact of GHEs on future careers and ongoing involvement in global health noted
- Chance to experience the practice of medicine in low resource areas of the world highly valued

“...miles upon miles away from everything I know, immersed in a language I don't understand... I found my purpose...”

“... I foresee global health being part of my future career...”

“...the global health elective helped reaffirm my interest in global health and underserved populations within the United States...”

“... provided impetus to continue working in global health for the rest of my life...”

Questions for Further Study

- Does participation in M3/M4 GHEs impact primary care career choice?
- Do students already interested in underserved populations choose to participate in GHEs at a higher rate?
- How does participation in global health service in M3/M4 augment students' clinical education and career planning?