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The Fellowship Program of the Department of Family Medicine

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The Fellowship Program of the Department of Family Medicine

The Bureau of Health Professions of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provides support for training to increase the supply of primary care practitioners. Post-graduate training in faculty development is one program in the HRSA initiative

Since 1978 the Department of Family Medicine has sponsored a fellowship program in faculty development. A second post-graduate track, an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-approved geriatrics fellowship has been offered since 1989. The Department will begin a third fellowship track in Sports Medicine in 1996.

Both the faculty development and geriatrics fellowship programs offer training to those who plan a career in academic medicine. Structured areas of emphasis include teaching, administration, research, medical writing and clinical skills. Full-time and half-time positions are available and several fellows have combined their academic training with a clinical position. Requirements of the faculty development fellowship may be completed over one or two years. The geriatrics fellowship is a full-time, two year experience. Trainees completing this fellowship are eligible to sit for the Certificate of Added Qualifications Examination of the American Boards of Family Medicine and Internal Medicine.

Each fellow is responsible for at least one research project that is developed in concert with a faculty mentor and then written up and submitted for publication in a medical journal. Additionally, fellows are encouraged to present their research at national and regional family medicine conferences.

For the 1995-1996 academic year, there will be five fellows beginning the program: one in geriatrics and four in faculty development. In June 1995, seven fellows completed their training, six of whom were in the faculty development track. Their research activities concerned a breadth of topics including a comparison of teen-aged fathers with sexually active teen males who are not parents; an assessment of the experience of residents working with youth in a non-violent conflict resolution curriculum; a qualitative evaluation of a cohort of youth in a homeless shelter; an assessment of the interpretability of Pap smears obtained in an acute care setting; telephone medicine; and a psycho linguistic model of patient physician interaction.

Core courses in research methods, teaching skills and medical writing are required program elements for all fellows. There is, nonetheless, an intended flexibility in the program's schedule to encourage the fellows to focus on areas of personal interest. A weekly research seminar offers fellows the opportunity to discuss their research areas in development in a collegial setting.

The department's Fellowship Committee is responsible for the program's structure and policies. Christopher Chambers, MD chairs the committee that includes seven faculty and all the current fellows as members. The growth and impact of the program are due, in no small way, to the extensive contributions of past and present fellows, most of whom have gone on to academic careers.

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About the Author

C. V. Chambers, MD, is the Fellowship Director of the Department of Family Medicine at Jefferson Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University.