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The Jefferson Health System Primary Care College: A New Beginning

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The Jefferson Health System Primary Care College: A New Beginning

The health care sector is in a volatile state of transformation, driven largely by competitive market forces that have reshaped the organization and delivery of health care. The Jefferson Health System has also undergone transformation in response to market forces to continue to provide quality, integrated health care services with the commitment to improve the health of our communities. As a result of this organizational restructuring, the Jefferson Health System will include 560 primary care physicians. To fulfill the mission of

"providing state-of-the-art, compassionate and cost effective healthcare services, to teach future healthcare professionals and to lead in the research, development, and introduction of improved methods of healthcare delivery"

requires that this large network of primary care physicians be integrated through shared values, knowledge, and standards. To this end, representatives from the Departments of Internal Medicine, Family Practice, Pediatrics, and Continuing Medical Education, and the Department of Health Policy, have begun to develop a framework for a "Primary Care College." The College is to include:

- Two educational tracks:
 1. Clinician-Educator, and
 2. Healthcare Administration
- a center for coordination of postgraduate courses, and
- physician placement services.

The aim of the educational courses is to alter clinical practice in order to provide cost effective, efficient, and quality care to patients in the Jefferson Health System, and to develop a dedicated team of teachers and role models. Specifically, the College's educational objectives are:

- to introduce and implement the foundations of clinical guidelines and disease state management methods for asthma, congestive heart failure, and diabetes mellitus;
- to teach and sustain paradigms for collaborative group practice and clinical improvement including total quality management, outcomes-based research, and evidence-based medicine;
- to provide a basic exposure to the business aspects of healthcare delivery in the current marketplace; and
- to teach adult learning principles and assessment techniques to assist busy clinicians to provide an improved learning environment.

These objectives will be addressed through a single semester, 48 CME credit hour course of study. The additional, manifold needs of the network's primary care physicians, in terms of timing, content, cost, and other logistical challenges, are presently being assessed by the planning committee. The results of which will be incorporated into the further planning and development of the Primary Care College.

Sandy Sauereisen: The Jefferson Health System Primary Care College

The value of such programs is recognized by all levels of healthcare delivery systems, yet the reality of the current fiscal climate creates a challenge for the procurement of funding. Nevertheless, the Primary Care College is fundamental to the continued success of the Jefferson Health System, the development of a cohesive network of primary care physicians, the provision of quality health care, and ultimately, the improvement of the health and well-being of our patients and communities.

About the Author

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