The Long White Coat Ceremony for Residents & Faculty in Family Medicine

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INTRODUCTION

- White coat ceremonies (WCC) mark transitions into medicine
- Begins professional identity formation as a physician
- Residency focused WCCs not common

METHODS

- Aurora Health Care Family Medicine Residency Program (FMRP)
- 90-min ceremony highlights core FM specialty values via:
  - Faculty narratives
  - History of the white coat and specialty of FM
  - Concludes with new residents "coated" by mentor

RESULTS: E SURVEY & TEXT ANALYSIS

- OCCURRENCE
  - FMRP White Coat Ceremony annual event 2009 to present
- PARTICIPATION
  - New interns, all other residents, faculty (highly encouraged)
  - Attendance increased annually from 30 (2009) to 79 (2014) and 97 (2015)
- E-Survey
  - 60% Response Rate (58/97): 41% residents; 24% FM faculty; 27% FM Clinic Staff; 8% other (GME staff, academic/hospital leaders)

RESULTS: SHORT TERM HOW TO START WCC

- Identify WCC champions and convene planning group from amongst key program leaders, a friendly chief resident and an administrative staff member
- Identify the tenets/Foundations of your specialty, emphasizing what is unique/differentiates your specialty from others

RESULTS: LONG TERM HOW TO START WCC

- KEY ACTION STEPS for starting residency WCC yielded common features associated with any initiative
  - Requires leaders and champions
  - Advanced planning - schedules, facilities, budget
  - Communication regarding the importance of marking transition events
  - Change management

WCC LEADERS RECS ON HOW TO START A RESIDENCY FOCUSED WCC

- CULTURE CHANGE STRATEGY: Consider the white coat ceremony as a strategy to reaffirm the values and culture of your specialty, clinic/hospital, and residency program for all team members.
- CONTINUUM OF MEDICAL EDUCATION: Take advantage of opportunities to reaffirm and reinforce the articulated values and principles:
  - When medical students or other health professions trainees rotate
  - As a referent point when addressing concerns re: professional behavior
  - As core curriculum session/discussion on patient experience
  - During advisor meetings with residents
  - Residency/fellowship graduation ceremonies

- DISSEMINATION: Reference your ceremony in recruitment materials, communications with hospital/clinic leaders, and extend invitations to hospital/system leaders and alumni
- EVOLUTION: Recognize that the WCC elements and topics will evolve based on formal and information evaluations and program/health care system priorities

CONCLUSIONS

- Residency WCC formally marks the transition from medical student to that of the physician
  - Designed to support new residents’ professional identity development by highlighting the history, ideals and values of their chosen specialty
  - Unanticipated outcome: Reaffirms faculty physicians’ specialty choice
- WCC elements change over time to reflect the evolving role of family physicians and the needs of the residency program
- Future study is needed on effects of the WCC longitudinally on curriculum, residents’ and faculty physicians’ professional identity development, and role (if any) of age, gender, and ethnicity

CITATION: