

The Strategic Value of Family Medicine in Schools of Medicine

Departments of Family Medicine play a critical role in advancing the educational mission, community engagement, research priorities, and workforce goals of medical schools while providing high-value clinical faculty who strengthen institutional reputation and impact.



Family Medicine Advocacy Checklist for Deans

1



Education & Service

Family Medicine Supports Institutional Mission of Education and Service

- Family Medicine provides essential training in outpatient continuity of care and preventive care.
- Student exposure to strong Family Medicine programs increases the likelihood of entering primary care fields.¹
- Family Medicine educators often lead innovative teaching in social determinants, health equity, community engagement, and health systems science.²
- State legislatures are prioritizing policies to expand access to high-quality primary care and improve health through measures such as setting primary care spending targets, launching commissions and task forces, and incentivizing workforce expansion, including in rural settings.³⁻⁵
- Medical school leaders are often called to produce more primary care physicians, align curricula with community health needs, and partner in initiatives to improve population health. Institutions with strong Family Medicine programs are better positioned to contribute to policy priorities, enhance their reputation, and demonstrate leadership in addressing both workforce and community health challenges.⁶

2



Reputation Among Peers

Family Medicine Strengthens Medical School Reputation Among Peer Institutions

- Medical schools with strong Family Medicine programs are better positioned to perform well in national rankings that emphasize primary care workforce outcomes, such as the US News & World Report.⁷
- Rankings incorporate peer assessments by deans and senior faculty, and indicators such as primary care workforce production and research productivity in population health and community-based care.⁷
- Family Medicine departments directly contribute to these outcomes by training and mentoring students who match into Family Medicine and other primary care specialties. Schools with robust Family Medicine programs consistently demonstrate strong primary care match rates and leadership in community-oriented care.⁸

3



Community Partner & Inclusive Excellence

Family Medicine Drives Inclusive Excellence and Promotes Institutional Reputation as Community Partner

- Family Medicine attracts faculty and trainees committed to serving underserved communities.⁹
- Family Medicine departments frequently lead community-engaged clinics and partnerships that enhance institutional visibility, attract students, and strengthen community trust. Family Medicine increases institutional credibility and partnerships with community organizations, which is critical for LCME accreditation standards on community engagement.^{6,10}
- Family Medicine is well-positioned to lead community-engaged initiatives supporting ACA Community Benefit requirements.¹¹⁻¹³

4



Research Strengthens Grant Portfolios

Family Medicine Research Strengthens Institutional Grant Portfolios

- Family Medicine research addresses real-world care delivery, implementation science, health disparities, and preventive care.¹⁴
- Family Medicine research contributes public health, health services research, and dissemination and implementation expertise which supports interdisciplinary grants with potential for high indirect cost recovery. This fills a gap in the translational research continuum with practice-based research that focuses on implementation and dissemination of scientific findings.¹⁴
- The National Institute of Health (NIH) Institutes and Centers increasingly prioritize research in primary care, especially in community and rural settings.¹⁵⁻¹⁷

5



High Value Faculty

Family Medicine offers High-Value Clinical Faculty

- The cost to recruit Family Medicine faculty is typically lower than many subspecialties, while turnover can create substantial financial and operational disruption.¹⁸
- Family Medicine faculty often fulfill multiple roles in education, clinical care, research, and community engagement, creating institutional value beyond clinical revenue alone.¹⁹⁻²¹



References: 1-21
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