



Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures®

## PROJECT MEDICAL EDUCATION

*An Interactive, Firsthand Learning Experience Explaining  
the Process of Becoming a Doctor and the Missions  
of Medical Schools and Teaching Hospitals*

---

Learn

---

Serve

---

Lead



**Association of  
American Medical Colleges**  
655 K Street, NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20001-2399  
T 202.828.0400  
www.aamc.org

Association of  
American Medical Colleges





Project Medical Education (PME) is a hands-on, interactive learning program intended to inform policymakers and their staffs, community leaders, donors, and others about the process of becoming a doctor, the three missions and work of medical schools and teaching hospitals, and the financial and other challenges posed to both students and institutions.

A PME event is designed to run for a day and a half, but it can be amended to fit the needs of the host institution, presenters, or participants.

**The program is meant to be education, not advocacy.** Bringing key stakeholders to campuses is a compelling way to demonstrate the intersection between medical education, patient care, and medical research.

### Why PME?

We have designed PME as a firsthand journey through the medical education continuum that conveys the overarching messages of medical schools and teaching hospitals and meets the informational needs of participants. The planning materials provide information that you need to host a successful PME event.

*(continued)*



### What Are PME's Overarching Messages?

- Medical education is the foundation and future of our nation's health care system. It is a complex, collaborative process that requires substantial resources—both intellectual and financial.
- Medical schools and teaching hospitals are national resources that provide essential benefits to the public through three integrated missions:
  - Educating and training the next generation of doctors and other health professionals
  - Conducting research to find tomorrow's cures
  - Providing the world's most advanced care to millions of patients
- Reliable, consistent support for the missions of medical schools and teaching hospitals is critical to maintaining the world-class doctors and health care system we have today.
- Erosion of support endangers the ability of medical schools and teaching hospitals to pursue their essential missions.

These messages serve as the overarching theme of the PME program and tie the blocks of instruction together.



- **Welcome and Medical School Admissions.** An overview of the admissions process and trends in applicants and enrollment.
- **Undergraduate Medical Education.** A discussion of the medical school curriculum and the changes it has undergone, medical school faculty roles, and how students finance medical school.
- **The Role and Missions of Teaching Hospitals and Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers.** A discussion of the three missions of teaching hospitals, including VA medical centers.
- **Graduate Medical Education (GME).** An explanation of the Match process, residency curriculum and workloads, how institutions finance GME, and the role of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).
- **Medical Research.** A discussion of the various types of research; the bench-to-bedside and bench-to-community continuums, including the role medical research plays in clinical care; MD-PhD programs and other pathways to a career in medical research; and how research is financed.
- **Graduation and Wrap-Up.** A review of information, as well as a discussion of certification and licensing.

Each block outline provides the key takeaway messages and topics for discussion, along with suggested interactive activities and a list of resources that can aid the discussion and be used as handouts. Electronic versions of the outlines, with links to the resources, can be found on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)).

The block outlines are meant to serve as base suggestions. Some topics may not apply to your institution, or you may wish to cover some topics not listed. You should always tailor your program and presentations to your institution and your audience. AAMC staff can assist with this.



### Select Dates

- If you are targeting an audience of federal policymakers, aim for congressional recesses. This allows senators and representatives, as well as their staffs, the most time to attend a PME session.
- If you are not targeting your PME to congressional representatives or staff, consider taking an informal poll of potential participants to see what dates may work best.
- Evaluate your internal resources. You will need to have space, presenters, and a team to plan and manage the program.



### Determine a Budget

- No two budgets are the same. Keep in mind the length of your program and the number of participants, which will affect your budget.
- Remember to include line items for support materials, postage, and, if required, room rental.
- Optional budget items include meals or receptions, hotel and travel for those coming from a distance, on-site travel, giveaways, and photography/video services. Be sure to review the congressional gift rules guidance on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)) for rules regarding paying for food and travel for federal policymakers and staff.
- A budget worksheet is available on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)).



### Build Your Team

- Secure support early in your planning from CEOs, deans, communications and government relations staff, and others, even if they will not be a part of your planning team.
- Use all your available resources. Be sure to include a range of team members who possess all relevant expertise.

(continued)



- Who makes up a good team?
  - An overall coordinator who leads and manages the program
  - People who know the faculty well and can suggest good presenters
  - Creative people who can design interactive learning activities
  - People who can be helpful in providing institutional messaging and securing media coverage
  - Detail-oriented people who can assist with planning and follow-up
  - People who know your facilities and internal processes for reserving rooms and equipment
  - Medical students and residents who can help develop the program and can participate in the event
- Don't limit the team to only communications staff or government relations staff. PME is an educational event and is meant to represent the breadth of medical education, patient care, and medical research.
  - Be sure to review the congressional gift rules guidance on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)) regarding involvement of registered lobbyists.
- If you have partnerships with a VA medical center, other health professions schools, a school of public health, or other institutions, think about including representatives from those institutions in your planning because their resources will strengthen the program.



### Invite Participants

- Decide on formal or informal invitations on the basis of your institution's relationship with invitees. A sample invitation is available on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)).
- Include a draft or sample agenda to help explain the time requirement and what participants might expect.
- Be sure to review the congressional gift rules guidance on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)) and determine who should send out the invitations. You may want to avoid having a registered lobbyist extend the invitation; an invitation from a registered lobbyist may create a host of issues related to travel expenses, meals, lodging, and so forth, and it may affect whether participants view the program as an educational event.
- Get to know your attendees ahead of time. Learn about their areas of responsibility, experience with health care issues and policy, professional or personal passions related to health care, and any ties to your institution.



### Invite Presenters

- What should you look for in your presenters?
  - Knowledgeable about their topics
  - Powerful communicators with the ability to convey their work using simple language
  - Unique perspectives on a timely topic or medical education in general
  - Highly regarded, credible, and influential from the perspective of your participants
- Include students and residents whenever possible.

(continued)



## Planning Your PME Event: Three Months Before (*continued*)



- How should you prepare presenters?
  - o Make sure they fully understand what is expected of them.
  - o Help them get to know their audience and encourage them to practice simplifying terminology and amending their presentation to fit the audience.
    - Provide as much information as can be included on the background of the participants, as well as a full list of other presenters.
    - Provide the outline for the block of instruction on which they will present so they can review the key messages, key topics, and resources.
    - Work with them to tailor the topics covered and level of information provided to your audience.
  - o Provide an overall schedule for the program.
  - o Remain in communication with them.
- Make high-level officials who are not presenters aware of the PME program because participants will come into contact with many individuals throughout their time at your facilities.

*These steps can occur simultaneously during this period, but they should be wrapped up by about one month before your PME event.*



## Follow Up On Responses From Participants

- Acceptances
  - Provide a review of arrangements for travel and accommodation needs.
  - Request a brief bio to share with other attendees.
  - Provide a copy of the admissions brochure for your institution.
  - A few weeks before the event, send out a final schedule, review of travel arrangements, list of participants, bios and photos of presenters, confidentiality agreement, and other clearances or waivers.
- Offer to serve as a resource for those who cannot attend, and invite them to tour your institution at a more convenient time or attend another PME event.



## Determine Locations

- Where should you take participants?
  - Locations that highlight your work in the three missions of academic medicine
  - Areas unique to your institution
  - Work areas of your most compelling speakers
  - Locations that will captivate participants with innovations, cutting-edge technology, or human drama
  - Locations they might not see otherwise
  - Emergency department/trauma unit (many issue and regulations center on this department that all policymakers should understand)
  - VA medical center if your institution has an affiliation with one
  - Other health professions schools or schools of public health with which you have partnered or are affiliated
- Try to include a variety of sites and aspects of your institution.
- Don't forget to alert security if access is restricted or if there are locations they need to know the group will be going.
- If participants will interact with patients or others, be sure to secure HIPAA-compliant confidentiality agreements and follow any other applicable laws and policies.
- Try to avoid distant locations that will require a significant amount of travel time, unless they offer something unique.

(continued)



### Reach Out to Media

- Coordinate with your institution's communications department or public relations contact.
- Work with AAMC staff to develop social media strategy and tactics. "Suggestions for Sharing Your PME Program on Social Media" is available on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)).



### Create Support Materials

- Graphic support for each block, which is most easily accomplished through the use of PowerPoint presentations, is helpful. But don't use the slides as a crutch. Let discussion flow organically, and always be open to questions.
- Provide take-home materials, such as a few one-pagers, for participants to review after their PME experience. Many of the resources listed in the block outlines can be used as take-home materials.
  - Don't burden participants with paper. You will be walking or traveling from location to location, and participants will not be able to carry a lot of handouts.
  - Consider giving participants the take-home materials at the end of the first day or allowing them to store them somewhere secure as you travel.
  - Consider collecting presenter handouts and giving them all to participants at the close of the event.



### Select Giveaways

- Read through the congressional gift rules guidance on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)) to make sure you stay within the legal limits.
- What should you consider as a giveaway to participants?
  - Framed class photographs (for example, photographs of the white coat ceremony, graduation, or other event)
  - Embroidered PME patch or some other small PME-branded item
  - Certificate of Completion
  - Personalized white coat with PME patch



## Walk-Throughs

- Rehearse your event once or twice beforehand to make sure everything is in place and the timing works.
- Make sure volunteer escorts know the schedule and route for the day.
- Set up communication plans for the day of your PME.
- Triple-check means of transportation. If you are renting vehicles, make sure they will be at the correct pick-up and drop-off locations at the correct times.
- Develop talking points to enhance travel and walking time, but allow the group to converse organically if that occurs.
- Remember to allow for restroom and water breaks.



## PME Event Day

- Put your plans into action.
- Post updates to social media throughout the day. “Suggestions for Sharing Your PME Program on Social Media” is available on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)).



## Evaluation

- Provide participants with multiple ways to provide feedback (for example, an evaluation form, verbal feedback in the last session, emails to the PME team). A sample evaluation form is available on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)).
- Ask presenters for feedback. A sample evaluation form for presenters is available on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)).
- Have an internal evaluation and debrief with the PME team and other involved parties to see what worked and what didn't.
- Have team members and leads provide feedback to the AAMC. An online feedback tool is available on the PME website ([www.aamc.org/pme](http://www.aamc.org/pme)).



## Follow-Up

- One week after your PME, send a thank-you letter to participants expressing appreciation, providing an anecdotal reference to their visit, reviewing key messages, responding to any unanswered questions, inviting them back, and offering your institution as a resource.
- Engage in ongoing follow-up, such as:
  - Schedule “alumni” visits or gathering.
  - Add participants to publication and event lists.
  - Continue to send related follow-ups (for example, updates on the work of presenters and newsclips).

## Interaction with Students and Residents

“One of the most effective aspects of the program is bringing together our medical students and residents with participants from the same generation. These two groups naturally have a lot in common, which leads to incredibly effective and dynamic interactions from the start.”

—Project Medical Education host, Texas A&M Health Science Center

“Speaking with the current medical students about their experiences really helped to reinforce what we had heard in the presentations.”

—Project Medical Education participant

## Hands-On Activities

“I see Project Medical Education as a valuable opportunity to provide state legislators and key congressional staff members with a hands-on experience, discovering for themselves the challenges faced by medical students, residents, and physicians in today’s health care environment.”

—Project Medical Education host, Michigan State University College of Human Medicine

“I really enjoyed [the program] and learned so much. I loved my resident rounds! I was in the cardiology intensive care unit and the operating room, so everything was very hands-on, and the doctors gave wonderful explanations and answered all of our questions.”

—Project Medical Education participant

## Interaction with Professionals and Institution Leadership

“Interaction of participants with our clinicians and leadership is beneficial to all. Attendees experience firsthand the components of an integrated delivery system.”

—Project Medical Education host, Scott & White Healthcare

“Having recently taken on health care as an issue area for my boss, it was priceless to me to be able to see and talk to people on the ground, people who are actually there doing medicine and practicing in the field. It was wonderful.”

—Project Medical Education participant

## Providing an Opportunity to Share Medical School and Teaching Hospital Policy in an Educational Format

“We start the day off with system information.... This leads to a roundtable policy discussion with an open exchange of ideas and dialogue.”

—Project Medical Education host, Scott & White Healthcare

“I appreciated the financial highlights update [where we learned more about the effects that] federal and state funding cuts have on hospital and residency training programs.”

—Project Medical Education participant