BLOCK 2 OF INSTRUCTION: The Medical School Experience, Undergraduate Medical Education

OVERVIEW: Medical education is an exciting experience but not well understood by those outside academic medicine. The United States trains the best physicians in the world, and while a U.S. medical school education is expensive, it remains a good investment. This block gives participants a taste of what medical education entails and discusses trends in medical education. It also teaches participants about medical school costs and student debt.

OBJECTIVES

- Give participants a basic understanding of the medical school experience.
- Provide an overview of U.S. undergraduate medical education (UME).
- Define your institution's approach to medical education and detail your curriculum.
- Establish students, residents, faculty, and other health care professionals as a care delivery team.

SUGGESTED PRESENTERS

- Head of UME
- Faculty members
- Current medical students
- Students at schools of other health professions

SUGGESTED TIME: 3 hours

KEY MESSAGES

- Medical school curricula are constantly evolving to incorporate new health trends, diseases, changes in economics, delivery system models, technologies, and other emerging issues.
- Medical schools prepare future physicians with what they need to practice, including knowledge of the sciences, communication skills, and teamwork. Students learn in a robust environment that includes instruction from faculty members who are on the forefront of patient care and research.
- Medical school is an expensive endeavor, but it remains a good investment.

KEY TOPICS

- Provide an overview of medical school curricula.
    - What does the curriculum look like at your institution?
        - How are clinical and basic science skills balanced?
        - How do you balance the missions of education and patient care?

        - How are cutting-edge research and medical innovations included in the classroom?
    - What changes have been made to your curriculum?
    - What are some of the national changes to the medical school curricula?
        - Additions and changes to innovation and technology
        - Changes to education around escalating health threats and new diseases, such as the opioid epidemic, obesity, and Zika
        - Integration of clinical studies and basic sciences
        - Focus on public health and health policy
        - Changes in care provision, including the introduction of team-based care and quality initiatives
            - Discuss interprofessional education and any partnerships you have with schools of other health professions or schools of public health.
            - Discuss any quality or safety projects students complete.

- Identify resources you provide to students.
    - Academic resources
    - Nonacademic or extracurricular resources
    - Advising and mentoring
    - Support and mental health resources

- Provide an overview of medical school faculty.
    - How does one become a faculty member at a medical school?
    - What is the makeup of your institution's faculty?
    - How do you work to ensure a diverse faculty?
    - How do you create an engaging and supportive environment?
        - What mentoring or career advising do you provide to junior and other faculty?
        - How do you retain the best faculty?
    - What nonteaching roles do your faculty members perform?

- Discuss how UME is financed and why medical education remains a good investment.
    - What is the average cost of attendance at your institution?
    - What is the average graduating student debt?
    - Make specific note of any institutional aid you provide.
    - Discuss repayment incentives and policies, including loan forgiveness and repayment, Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), National Health Service Corps (NHSC), Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students, Title VII loans, and military service.

ACTIVITIES

- Discuss the medical school process and curriculum.

- Give participants their course profile and financing information containing course load and debt information for an average medical student enrolled at your institution or affiliate. Be sure to how medical education is a good investment.

- Consider having participants meet with medical students who can explain what their daily lives are like.

- After the medical education introduction and before discussion of medical school financing or other topics, consider one or two of the following hands-on activities:
    - Anatomy lab
    - Robotic surgery practice
    - Simulation lab
    - Standardized patient simulations

- Consider having a panel discussion with members of faculty—how faculty view their roles, how they became faculty, and what they see as trends in medical education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Attempt to integrate talking points and discussion into the hands-on activities.

- If conducting an anatomy lab, discuss your institution's donor program. Also, be sure to mention that this is an optional activity for those who might be uncomfortable with it. Consider examining various organs at stations, rather than presenting a whole cadaver. This approach seems to be better received.

- Include medical students whenever possible. Discuss their role and responsibilities, as well as key topics, with them prior to the event and try to involve a member of your institution's financial aid office in that discussion.

- Provide participants with handouts or other resources for further information on financing a medical school education.

- Explain how curriculum innovations might be integrated into the hands-on teaching activities.

- Presenters should remember that most attendees do not have a science background. Keep it simple.