

Perspective: Is It Time for Advocacy Training in Medical Education?

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Perspective: Is It Time for Advocacy Training in Medical Education?

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Abstract:

As the modern medical system becomes increasingly complex, a debate has arisen over the place of advocacy efforts within the medical profession. The authors argue that advocacy can help physicians fulfill their social contract. For physicians to become competent in patient-centered, clinical, administrative, or legislative advocacy, they require professional training. Many professional organizations have called for curricular reform to meet society's health needs during the past 30 years, and the inclusion of advocacy training in undergraduate, graduate, and continuing medical education is supported on both pragmatic and ethical grounds. Undergraduate medical education, especially, is an ideal time for this training because a standard competency can be instilled across all specialties. Although the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education includes advocacy training in curricula for residency programs, few medical schools or residency programs have advocacy electives. By understanding the challenges of the health care system and

how to change it for the better, physicians can experience increased professional satisfaction and effectiveness in improving patient care, systems-based practice, and public health.

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