

Piloting a Patient Safety & Quality Executive Certificate in Medical School

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INTRODUCTION

Quality improvement and patient safety are skills increasingly important for physicians to understand and master. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) endorses quality & patient safety (QPS) education in medical school, however so far only few defined QRS curriculum within medical school has been described in the literature². Although medical school curriculum is on its own inherently challenging, physician executives illustrate the importance of flexibility for success within the dynamic world of medical management. We believe that offering an integrated QPS curriculum within medical school not only instills such values within our next generation of physicians, but by balancing the requirements of an additional certificate with those of a traditional medical school curriculum will equip them with the opportunity to develop flexibility, time management and organizational skills need for medical leadership. The Executive Certificate for Patient Safety & Quality is an existing Executive Masters offered at Georgetown University. We have adapted the traditional certificate to complement the traditional medical student curriculum at the Georgetown University School of Medicine. We plan to consistently accrue feedback on the Executive Certificate and analyze successful study habits and certificate use in career ambitions from the participating students to constantly improve course content and education accordingly. Certificate goals will include (1) attaining a maximal student three year completion rate (2) maximizing student participation satisfaction and (3) complementing medical student career aspirations.

DESIGNING THE COURSE

The longitudinal pilot Executive Certificate will begin in the second year of medical school and will consist of 3 courses, one course per year. Each academic year students will be expected to complete a course within a 6 month window, expecting to average about 15 hours of study time per month. Two months (January & February) were left open in the first year for study time dedicated to the USMLE Step 1.

The monthly work will adhere to the same goals and timeline throughout each course:

- Students are expected to start reading accompanied literature during the first week of the month
- Three discussion questions will be posted on an online discussion forum, which are to be answered based on the readings and respective student contributions by the end of the second week.
- The last two weeks are dedicated to peer responses to discussion posts, stimulating intelligent discussion and interactive learning amongst the students.

In addition, some courses will include short assignments based on both the readings stimulating student creativity and flexibility that is inherent to executive education. All assignments, discussion questions and reflections need to be complete no later than 11:59pm EST on the last day of each month. Finally, participating students are required to develop a capstone project for the Healthcare Leadership Educational track, and are encouraged to use the certificate to start developing their capstone project starting within their first year.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

3-Year Timeline

Year	Course Name	Anticipated Coursework (in Hours)									
		July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan*	Feb*	Mar	April
M2	Introduction to Patient Safety			15	15	15	15			15	15
M3	Patient Safety Science, Risk and Mitigation	15	15	15	15	15	15				
M4	Quality Improvement Methods	15	15	15	15	15	15				

*Step 1 study time

- 1. Introduction to Safety Science and Quality-** Introduces historical concepts, relevant theory, tools and measurement metrics, current issues and proposals for effective improvement in patient safety and healthcare quality.
- 2. Safety Science, Risk and Mitigation-** Led by national patient safety experts and advocates, including high risk contexts, risk assessments, safe system design, apology and patient safety priorities.
- 3. Quality Improvement Methods-** Students are encouraged to take initiative with quality improvement tools, data collection & analytics with statistical tools needed for critical evaluation of current policies, and new project management techniques.

RESULTS TRACKING

Initial participating students	14
Prior management or QPS experience	6/14
Goals of participating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership & business career oriented (4/14) • Managing QI projects/research and develop QPS systems in future career (4/14) • Understanding safety measures to enhance personal patient safety (9/14) • Navigate complex healthcare system (1/14)
Initial study strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous effective time management (2/14) • Planning study time into schedule ahead of time (7/14) • No plans yet (4/14)

The table reflects the initial number, goals, and study habits of participating students in the pilot executive certificate. We plan to additionally track student retention and satisfaction on regular yearly intervals throughout the three year certificate, with the goal of consistently updating content to maximize retention, goals and success of future participating medical students. Based on results, we hope to develop a course that may complement current medical school curriculum and provide an opportunity for extra career development for students interested in quality improvement and patient safety within medicine.