

The Long White Coat Ceremony for Residents & Faculty in Family Medicine

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INTRODUCTION

- White coat ceremonies (WCC) mark transitions into medicine
- Begins professional identity formation as a physician
- Residency focused WCCs not common

METHODS

- Aurora Health Care Family Medicine Residency Program (FMRP)
- 90-min ceremony highlights core FM specialty values via:
 - Faculty narratives
 - History of the white coat and specialty of FM
 - Concludes with new residents “coated” by mentor

WHITE COAT CEREMONY SCHEDULE

MINUTES	TOPIC	SPEAKER
5	Welcome and Opening Remarks • Reason for ceremony	Moderator: Sr. Faculty Member
12	Identity as Family Physician through Narrative • Medicine as a privilege and humility • Relationships w patients, families and colleagues	Sr. Faculty Member
6	Welcome New Faculty with STFM Pin	Program Director
15	History of White Coat through Art • Antiquity: Medicine as science - Hippocrates • 16 th Century: EBM & physician as servant • 19 th Century: Scientific advances	Associate Program Director
10	History of Family Medicine • ABFM Emblem symbolism • Interplay between societal needs and evolution of specialty as science and art	Associate Program Director
10	Awarding of Honorary White Coat • Recognition of a non-physician faculty member who excels in working with trainees, faculty, and patients/clinics	Program Director
8	Recognition & Acknowledgements • Recognize Graduate Medical Education, hospital and system leaders in attendance • Faculty and clinic staff	Moderator
20	Bestowal of White Coats for New Residents • New resident receives coat from a 2 nd or 3 rd year resident • Each new resident asked to say “something interesting about yourself”	Moderator with assistance from Program Director, Associate PD
4	Final Comments & Closing • Congratulations to new residents & thanks WCC organizers • Welcome to “The Family”	Moderator

EVALUATION: 2 DATA SOURCES

- 6 item E-survey of attendees: 3 demographic; 1 Likert and 2 narrative response on what value and areas for improvement
- WCC leaders debriefed to determine WCC key elements

RESULTS: E SURVEY & TEXT ANALYSIS

- **OCCURRENCE**
 - FMRP White Coat Ceremony annual event 2009 to present
- **PARTICIPATION**
 - New interns, all other residents, faculty (highly encouraged)
 - Attendance increased annually from < 30 (2009) to 79 (2014) and 97 (2015) due to wider audience (clinical staff, hospital and health system leaders)
- **E-Survey**
 - 60% Response Rate (58/97): 41% residents; 24% FM faculty; 27% FM Clinic Staff; 8% other (GME staff, academic/hospital leaders)
 - 79% rated WCC as an “important transition ceremony for our residency program”
 - Perceived as reaffirming FM values for faculty/staff
 - **TEXT ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE RESPONSES** regarding what participants valued (35 most frequent used words; larger the word more frequent its use)



RESULTS: SHORT TERM HOW TO START WCC

WCC LEADERS RECS ON HOW TO START A RESIDENCY FOCUSED WCC

SHORT TERM ACTION ITEMS



- Identify WCC champions and convene planning group from amongst key program leaders, a friendly chief resident and an administrative staff member
- Identify the tenets/foundations of your specialty, emphasizing what is unique/differentiates your specialty from others
- Book date and facility on calendars; set agenda; confirm presenters (consider pairing it with an existing event)
- Extend invitations to key leaders of your organization/system (and they come)! Outline a budget including existing (e.g., white coats) and modest additional costs (e.g., pins, food)
- Start talking about it – with faculty, staff, resident – emphasizing that it’s a solemn and joyful part of your residency program

RESULTS: LONG TERM HOW TO START WCC

- **KEY ACTION STEPS** for starting residency WCC yielded common features associated with any initiative
 - Requires leaders and champions
 - Advanced planning - schedules, facilities, budget
 - Communication regarding the importance of marking transition events
 - Change management

WCC LEADERS RECS ON HOW TO START A RESIDENCY FOCUSED WCC

LONG TERM ACTION ITEMS

- **CULTURE CHANGE STRATEGY:** Consider the white coat ceremony as a strategy to reaffirm the values and culture of your specialty, clinic/hospital, and residency program for all team members.
- **CONTINUUM OF MEDICAL EDUCATION:** Take advantage of opportunities to reaffirm and reinforce the articulated values and principles:
 - When medical students or other health professions trainees rotate
 - As a referent point when addressing concerns re: professional behavior
 - As core curriculum session/discussion on patient experience
 - During advisor meetings with residents
 - Residency/fellowship graduation ceremonies
- **DISSEMINATION:** Reference your ceremony in recruitment materials, communications with hospital/clinical leaders, and extend invitations to hospital/system leaders and alumni
- **EVOLUTION:** Recognize that the WCC elements and topics will evolve based on formal and information evaluations and program/health care system priorities

CONCLUSIONS

- Residency WCC formally marks the transition from medical student to that of the physician
 - Designed to support new residents’ professional identity development by highlighting the history, ideals and values of their chosen specialty
 - Unanticipated outcome: Reaffirms faculty physicians’ specialty choice
- WCC elements change over time to reflect the evolving role of family physicians and the needs of the residency program
- Future study is needed on effects of the WCC longitudinally on curriculum, residents’ and faculty physicians’ professional identity development, and role (if any) of age, gender, and ethnicity

CITATION:

Bidwell JL, Robinson MW, de Grandville C, Santana E, Simpson D. The White Coat Ceremony as Professional Identity Formation Activity for Residents and Faculty in Family Medicine. J Med Educ & Curriculum Development [Accepted]