

GMC's resident rotation a 'big success'

Twelve residents have now completed the Gwinnett Medical Center's (GMC) optional, month-long Resident Rotation Program (RRP) at the Medical Association of Georgia (MAG) since the program was created in 2016.

"From my standpoint, the program has been a big success," reports MAG Executive Director and CEO Donald J. Palmisano Jr. "The participants have received a real-world introduction to MAG's policy-making process, the medical profession's advocacy efforts, and the state legislative and regulatory processes."

Meanwhile, GMC RRP Director **John S. Harvey, M.D.**, says that, "This program is also developing physician leaders, and it is building bridges between the resident community and the House of Medicine in Georgia."

He adds that, "The participants have each completed a special project that is either aligned with their personal interests or MAG's strategic objectives – like writing a policy resolution for MAG's House of Delegates or writing a position paper on health insurance networks or making a presentation on end-of-life issues."

Dr. Harvey, a surgeon who served as MAG's president in 2015-2016, also notes that, "The residents are mentored by MAG staff and have the opportunity to participate in special activities, depending on the time of year. For example, they might spend time with MAG's Government Relations staff at the State Capitol during the legislative session or they might sit in on a recording of MAG's 'Top Docs Radio' show or they might attend MAG's House of Delegates meeting."

"It was an uplifting experience," recalls **Shoheb Ali, M.D.**, an internist who was the first GMC RRP participant. "The MAG rotation provides medical residents with an opportunity to connect with lawmakers to advocate for patients and physicians. By understanding the mechanics of the legislative process, we have the tools we need to author and endorse health care resolutions and vote for them to become policy at MAG's House of Delegates. Engaging young physicians in health care legislation can spark an early interest in leadership roles and influence them to improve health care practices."

Rishi Singhal, M.D., notes that, "My project focused on the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act. I had the opportunity to speak with MAG leadership about the impact this legislation has on patients and physicians throughout Georgia. I spent my time at MAG looking for ways for private practices to decrease the financial burden associated with complying with these new regulations, and I was especially fortunate to attend multiple hearings and conferences on legislation specifically impacting ophthalmology, which is my specialty."

Internist **Haoran Peng, M.D.**, says that, "My MAG rotation gave me the opportunity to conduct research on state legislation that was designed to reduce prescription drug misuse. It was a great experience that really opened my eyes in terms of the critical role that legislation and regulations play in the state's practice environment."

Physiatrist **Hannie Batal, M.D.**, asserts that, "The MAG rotation was an extremely worthwhile personal and professional experience, and I took advantage of the opportunity in full. I got to talk to state legislators on Physicians' Day at the Capitol, and I got to participate in a Trauma Day event. I was also able to leverage my rotation to help sponsor a MAG House of Delegates resolution that was designed to regulate tattoo ink. For me, this was more than a just a non-clinical elective rotation...it was a developmental and educational opportunity that every resident should explore."



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Dr. Batal asks, "If we don't get involved and represent the medical profession, who will?"

In addition to Drs. Ali, Singhal, Peng, and Batal, the GMC RRP participants have included **Greg Bookout, M.D.** (emergency medicine), **Jake Choi, M.D.** (radiology), **Kelsey Guerreso, M.D.** (radiology), **Ben Hayes, M.D.** (internal medicine), **Ian McCullough, M.D.** (anesthesiology), **Will Nixon, M.D.** (diagnostic radiology), **Taylor Phelps, M.D.** (ophthalmology), **Michael Redmond, M.D.** (psychiatry), **Lawrence Williams, M.D.** (internal medicine), and **Brian Xavier, M.D.** (radiology).

It is worth noting that Dr. Hayes won an Association of Hospital Medical Educators' award for a white paper that he wrote on prior authorization while he went through the RRP, while Dr. McCullough helped the MAG Medical Reserve Corps secure a \$15,000 grant from the National Association of County and City Health Officials.

Contact Dr. Harvey at johnharveynd@gmail.com with questions related to the GMC RRP.