

**Charles, L. Covenant Health care of the elderly program: Training future physicians and promoting research and clinical excellence for the medically complex senior (Oral presentation)**

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**Context.** North America's population is aging, and the current and projected increases in seniors have important implications for delivery of health care services. These changes have resulted in a need to provide Family Physicians with the needed skills for caring for an aging population.

**Objective.** To provide an overview of the Enhanced Skills Diploma Care of the Elderly (COE) program at the University of Alberta, Canada and the development of incremental Core Competencies for Family Medicine residents and COE residents.

**Design.** Non-experimental with a focus on program development and enhancement. The COE program, initiated in 1993, was designed to provide family physicians with skills in caring for the elderly. Historically the program has ranged from 6 months to 1 year, with the requirement that the learner meet core objectives with the 6 month program, with additional educational objectives in geriatrics for those completing the 12 month program. More recently, Core Competencies have been introduced that define expected levels of competencies needed for practice.

**Results.** Fifty-one residents have completed the COE program to date with the majority completing the 6 month program. Based on resident and preceptor feedback, the program recently has been expanded to 1 year with the addition of an Exit Examination. Further refinement has included the identification and implementation of 85 Core Competencies, with the Core Competencies based on CanMEDS-Family Medicine Roles. 57 Core Competencies are used as the curriculum objectives and in the evaluation of Family Medicine residents.

**Conclusions.** The University of Alberta Division of COE has developed an infrastructure and training program that provides innovative team-based models of care. As with other disciplines, the introduction of Core Competencies will assist in further refinement of the program. Ongoing evaluation will allow for assessment of the effectiveness of the Core Competencies.