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Digitally Available Emergency Department Orientation: Overcoming Hurdles to Early Exposure to the Field of Emergency Medicine in Medical Education

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In an effort to ignite and foster interest in emergency medicine (EM), the Emergency Medicine Interest Group (EMIG) at University of California Irvine, School of Medicine (UCI SOM) provides over 6 procedure workshops, didactic lectures, community outreach events and emergency department (ED) shifts to medical students throughout the year.

One of EMIG's most successful and longest running programs is the *Emergency Department Experience Program*. With this opportunity, a medical student who has completed the ED orientation gains access to the contact information and schedule of a participating ED faculty member. The medical student is encouraged to set-up 4 to 8 hour ED shifts, where they are expected to be active participants in the clinical duties of taking care of ED patients and performing procedures.

Available to any medical student who has completed the orientation, these shifts allow for early clinical exposure. EMIG understands the importance of early clinical exposure in EM, given the fact that EM rotations are only available during fourth year of clinical rotations. For most medical

students who have not decided on their medical specialty, this scheduling format may be too late to apply to a competitive EM residencies without taking a year off to strengthen their residency application.

The ED Experience Program allows for flexible scheduling. The receptive faculty at the UCI Emergency Department welcome students whenever they are available to participate. Students who participate in the program, are encouraged to follow 1 or 2 ED faculty members to facilitate meaningful mentorship and research opportunities.

The program is not limited to students interested in EM, and every medical student can gain valuable experience enhancing their clinical skills. On a typical shift, a medical student practices their history taking, physical exam, patient presentation, ultrasound, splinting, venipuncture, catheter insertion and interpretation of various imaging. These skills are essential for performing well during the clinical years of medical school and beyond.

One of the limitations to this opportunity was the in-person ED orientation requirement. The ED orientation is essential to optimize student and faculty time by providing



Figure 1. Didactic lecture led by emergency department faculty.



Figure 2. Medical students participating in a venipuncture procedure workshop.

a clear outline of student expectations, tips on performing well and ED layout. In the past, in-person orientations were held once or twice during the academic year. Undoubtedly, some interested students every year were not able to join the in-person orientation, and ED administration staff had to take time out of their busy schedule to lead orientation sessions. To eliminate this hurdle, EMIG has decided to

produce orientation videos that will be available EMIG's website (<http://www.uciemig.com>) along with an interactive, digital map and a series of videos that take the place of the in-person orientation. By moving the orientation to a web-based, self directed activity, UCI EMIG will be able to introduce and orient more medical students to EM and reduce the strain on department staff.



Figure 3. Medical students on an emergency department experience shift meet Los Angeles County Fire Department Paramedics after they deliver a trauma patient.