

In this section you will find information on:

- Establishing the Mission of the FMIG
- Infrastructure/Charter of an FMIG
- Recruiting Leaders/Members
- FMIG Activities
- Choosing and Scheduling Events
- Administrative Support
- Building relationships with other stakeholders

Establishing the Mission

As in any other organization, it is often helpful to have guiding principles and goals of the FMIG clearly stated. One of the simplest ways to accomplish this is through a mission statement. This statement can be carried over or modified year to year. It should be flexible enough to be adaptable to changing priorities and interests of student leaders.

The mission statement should be used each year at the initial planning meeting to help focus goals for the year and to help the students see the larger picture of their planning. This provides an opportunity for them to change or add to the statement as well.

Examples of FMIG Mission Statements

1. The Family Medicine Student Association (FMSA) at the Medical College of ABC is one of the largest and most active organizations on campus with a wide range of programming available to interested students. The mission of FMSA is to promote the values and philosophy of family medicine to the students of the Medical College of ABC and to others within our community.
2. To enhance knowledge of and increase exposure to family medicine for all XYZ students; to promote healthy behavior in the community through community service events; to maintain connection with and offer students exposure to the local, state, and national communities of family medicine.
3. Mission: Promote the values and vision of family medicine at the MNO State University College of Medicine and the surrounding community.

Objective 1: Education – Increase awareness and educate medical students about family medicine. Assist in residency searches and understanding the Match.

Objective 2: Professional Development – Provide opportunities for mentorship, networking, and leadership development for medical students and family medicine residents.

Objective 3: Outreach – Conduct community service projects on behalf of patients in MNO and the surrounding areas.

Objective 4: Advocacy – Shape health care policy through interactions with government, the public, and physician organizations at local, state, and national level.

Structural Goals

Several types of goals can be incorporated into the statement. These are content goals for student members and they are directly translatable into activities and are easy to understand and apply. They include such example as:

- *Understanding the field of family medicine:* This could include areas such as lifestyle stats on salary and working hours, scope of practice options, and impact of family medicine on the larger health care system.
- *Providing education:* This could include education about family medicine, or medical and professional student development. Examples of topical areas in this category would be presentations on aspects of family medicine as a career, topics outside the typical medical school curriculum such as balancing personal and professional life, or teaching skills development in such areas as differential diagnosis development or the physical examination.
- *Promoting service:* Service projects can be focused on the community or the hospital or college, and can be directed to a wide variety of service recipients.
- *Providing unique experiences:* Some FMIGs may wish to move beyond information into promoting or providing experiences, from clinical practice to international settings.

Thematic Goals

These are broader principles of operation and generally guide overall direction of the FMIG. The leaders may wish for example, to prioritize providing a bridge between student members and family physicians in practice. This could influence choice of topics or speakers or even generate a dedicated new program.

Process Goals

These would influence how the organization coordinates its activities. An example would be to prioritize partnering with other student groups in organizing activities. This would result in initial planning in matching likely groups and topics as the year's schedule is coming together and facilitate integration of goals with planning.

If your FMIG does not have a mission statement or statement of goals, you might want to encourage your student leadership to develop it in order to observe its effect on the FMIG. It would almost certainly generate new ideas and a new viewpoint on how the organization prioritizes and integrates planning.

Infrastructure and Charters

Infrastructure

The leadership structure of an FMIG should reflect the unique strengths and needs of that individual group. Although the number of leaders and the responsibilities of each position can be decided by the FMIG, it is suggested that each group have at least a president and a treasurer. Below are a few examples of leadership structures at several FMIGs.

Examples

Here are some samples of organizations structures of FMIGs across the nation

School A: (University of Mississippi)

President
Vice President
Secretary/Treasurer
Community Service Coordinator
Social Events Coordinator
Public Affairs Coordinator
Clinical Skills Coordinator
Residency Fair Coordinators
Class Representatives (from all 4 classes)
Resident Advisors
Faculty Advisors (2)

School B: (UMKC)

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Community Service Chair
Professional Development Chair
Public Relations Chair
Membership Chair
Social Chair
M1 Representatives (3)

School C: (Brody at East Carolina University)

President
Vice President

Secretary
Treasurer
M1 Representative

School D: (University of Nebraska)

President
Vice President
Recruitment Chair
Communications Chair
Secretary
Tar Wars Chair
M1 Representatives (2)
M3/M4 Representatives (1 of each)

Charters

Many medical schools/student activities offices will require a Charter for campus-based student groups. Each of these charters may ask for different items including, but not limited to:

- Mission Statement
- Goals/Priorities
- Organizational Chart
- List of Officers and Members
- Dues Structure

Examples

Here are some sample Charters from FMIGs across the nation

School A:

The ABC University Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG) was started by ABC students and the Department of Family Medicine shortly after the Department was established in 1997. The FMIG was created with the purpose of increasing awareness and interest in family medicine, as well as helping anyone interested in pursuing a career in family medicine. All of our activities are open to non-member students so that we might educate all medical students about family medicine. We offer a variety of events - seminars, round-table discussions, conferences, dinners, workshops, and more - that may interest students considering areas of family medicine.

Being involved with FMIG:

- Provides educational and informational opportunities not provided through the traditional medical school curriculum
- Assists students seeking residencies in family medicine
- Aids students with opportunities to attend state and national conventions
- Encourages relationships with family medicine faculty
- Creates community between FMIG colleagues.

Mission

To inform students at ABC University about family medicine as an option for a future career and to foster interest and involvement in the primary care community.

FMIG Goals

1. Foster interest in primary care among ABC students.
2. Expand AAFP student membership at ABC.
3. Increase BUSM ties to regional and national family medicine networks.
4. Further vertical integration of MS3 and MS4 students into FMIG activities.
5. Continue opportunities to learn more about family medicine established in previous years.

School B:

XYZ FMIG Mission Statement

- The mission of XYZ FMIG is to increase awareness of and stimulate interest in family medicine. We advance this mission by providing service to our students, our school, our community, and mid-Missouri.

XYZ FMIG Goals

1. To provide information on careers available in family medicine
2. To encourage communication between faculty MD's, community physicians, and FMIG members
3. To provide leadership opportunities
4. To facilitate communication regarding the field of family medicine through our website, newsletters, educational forums, service projects, student mentoring, brown bag meetings and workshops
5. To inform members of current issues affecting the practice of medicine
6. To provide an opportunity for state and national involvement in the Missouri Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)

Recruiting Leaders

Recruiting students to hold leadership positions in your FMIG is an important step to building a strong foundation for your group. The most effective way to recruit leaders is to sell the position by highlighting some of the benefits of the position. These include:

- Personal opportunity to explore the family medicine specialty
- Meeting family medicine physicians
- Forming a relationship with the dean/department of family medicine
- Free dinners and fun activities
- Building a resume/curriculum vitae
- Becoming involved in a national family medicine professional organization

There are many strategies that FMIGs can adopt to recruit ongoing leadership. One of the strategies for continuing a strong FMIG is to have outgoing officers each year recruit volunteers to run for their positions in the upcoming year. Many FMIGs also have co-chairs for positions or activities. If you can get co-chairs from multiple medical school years (M1, M2, M3) they may automatically replace each other on the committee. Another way to guarantee candidates is to publicize the election several weeks in advance to give members the chance to consider running for office and do some research about what is involved.

Keep in mind that finding new leadership doesn't end with elections. That's just the start. Many FMIGs need to have a strategic planning session or retreat at the beginning of the year. This can be facilitated by the FMIG Faculty Advisor or the state chapter. Use the rest of the year to find volunteers to coordinate special events. For example, interested third- and fourth-year students can plan events for Part II of the Boards, residency dinners, interviewing workshops, etc. Upperclassmen, due to their busy clerkship schedules, may only want to be in charge of one event. Try to accommodate all interested students' schedules and needs—it's the best way to capitalize on good leadership and expand your programming.

Best Practice for Recruiting Leaders: Ohio Academy of Family Physicians

Every other year the OAFP pays for a leadership retreat for the co-presidents of all the FMIGs in the state. The student leaders have an overnight stay and work on teambuilding activities, as well as strategic planning for the year, including cross-campus events.

Recruiting Student Members

There are many ways to recruit members for your FMIG and what will be most effective for your group depends on the size of your medical school and FMIG.

Listed below are a few popular recruitment ideas:

- Set up a table at an activities fair or student organization fair – The AAFP can provide you with brochures and handouts for this type of event (the list of materials is available in the Resources section on Virtual FMIG, and through the AAFP Student Membership Coordinator program, see below)
- Run procedural workshops that appeal to a wide-range of medical students
- Coordinate a breakfast for new students

Also, check out the profiles of the Program of Excellence (PoE) Winners on Virtual FMIG for other recruitment strategies.

Increasing membership in your FMIG can be greatly helped through an effective communication plan. Check to see if your school's e-mail system allows class-wide or school-wide e-mails. This is a great way to advertise your programming and meetings. Also, you can request free postcards and posters from the AAFP staff to place on bulletin boards (e-mail Ashley Bentley at abentley@aafp.org for more information). Some FMIGs have set up a Web site or a blog to communicate with members and potential members. Others have created a weekly or monthly newsletter. It is vital that students (members and non-members) know about your group and its programming.

Best Practice: University of Pittsburgh FMIG website

<https://sites.google.com/site/pittmedfmig/home>

By using a free resource, Google Sites, the University of Pittsburgh FMIG leaders created a website just for its FMIG. The site includes a schedule of programming on campus, service opportunities, testimonials, photos, profiles of the leaders and contact information.

AAFP Student Membership Coordinator Program

In addition to advertising your FMIG and its activities, it is also helpful to designate a Student Membership Coordinator. The FMIG, along with the student in this position, will earn incentives for increasing student membership in the AAFP. Student membership in the AAFP is another “selling point” that encourages students to join your group.

The Student Membership Coordinator position is an annual position that lasts the academic year. It is helpful to have this position as part of your FMIG’s organizational structure so that it is filled each year. In addition to the incentives listed below, student membership coordinators also receive brochures, handouts and giveaways to use to promote the group and family medicine on campus.

Below are the incentives for FMIGs with a Student Membership Coordinator:

- 25 new AAFP student applications - \$25
- 50 new AAFP student applications - \$50
- 75 new AAFP student applications - \$75
- 100 new AAFP student applications - \$100
- 150 new AAFP student applications - \$150

Each time the FMIG earns an incentive, the Student Membership Coordinator chooses to receive a gift card to Amazon.com, iTunes or Starbucks. For more information and each year’s updated information on this position, see aafp.org/studentcoordinator or contact Julie Herzog at jherzog@aafp.org.

FMIG Activities

After determining your FMIG's goals, your group may want to brainstorm about possible programming ideas that help achieve these goals. For some FMIGs, these range from community service projects to clinical skills workshops. Below is a short list of programming ideas. For more information, check out the Program of Excellence (PoE) winning profiles on Virtual FMIG at fmignet.aafp.org/poe.

Community Service

- Tar Wars (supported by the AAFP)
- AIM (Americans in Motion- supported by the AAFP)
- Community Health Fair
- Student Run Free Health Clinic
- School- or Community-based Wellness/Health Education Program

Almost all FMIG student leaders will include one or more service projects in the organization's activities. Service Projects are important because they provide:

- An opportunity to see direct benefits of service
- A chance to work as a group to achieve a larger goal
- An appreciation of the larger world around the educational environment
- A good model for future professional development

You can encourage student leaders to make service activities an integral part of their work, although, in general this happens naturally. Students might need some assistance in visualizing how to maximize the benefits of these opportunities.

In particular, they might need help with:

- *Identifying a charity or recipient:* This is often driven by student preferences and local needs of the college, hospital, or community. Sometimes collaboration with another group already operating a successful service project is the best choice.
- *Defining goals:* What is the ultimate goal of the project and can it be easily defined for promotion? Is this going to be a fundraiser or directed volunteer service? Will it be at one location or multiple? Is it community or hospital-based?

- *Informing the larger community:* Service projects often capture the interest of the public beyond the FMIG and perhaps beyond the college and hospital. This is often a good opportunity to inform news media of your event, both for the value of locating more volunteers or contributors and for the publicity value for your group and your school.
- *Promoting service learning:* With a little advance thought, the experience can be transitioned into service learning. This can be as easy as adding components of journaling about the experience and evaluating its effect.

Service projects often bring out the best in students by permitting them to look outside of themselves, connect with others perhaps less fortunate, and expand life perspectives. This can have significant maturing effects on participating students, and help them promote positive professional development.

Some FMIGs have made a commitment to performing one community service project a month, others only commit to one service project per year. These types of projects don't always have to require a major time commitment from all FMIG members. Community service projects can range from volunteering at a clinic to sending holiday cards to elderly residents of a nursing home or collecting canned food for a local food pantry. Community Service projects are also a great collaborative activity with others organizations on your campus that have similar mission statements such as AMSA, SNMA, LMSA or others.

Best Practice for Community Service: Penn State University FMIG

Dash for Diabetes- 5k run/walk

This run/walk has raised over \$3,000 in money for local diabetes support groups as well as raise awareness for diabetes and chronic disease. There are donations from local businesses for the top runners and a raffle associated with the race. The run is located on the Harrisburg College of Medicine Campus.

General Programming

Lectures/Discussions

- Lunch and Learns: Whether your FMIG chooses to have a discussion or a presentation, lunch and learns are great ways to attract new members and to keep your current members involved. A couple of ideas include:
 - Invite local family physicians to talk about their experiences
 - Ask several family medicine residents from different backgrounds to discuss the diversity of residencies that are available
 - Use special topics- patient-centered medical home (PCMH), global health, rural health, public health, inner city/urban health, community health centers, public policy – as lecture topics to garner a larger audience.
- Dinner presentations
- *Strolling Through the Match* presentation: The AAFP can provide your FMIG with *Strolling Through the Match* books and a customizable PowerPoint presentation. Some FMIGs choose to make this a series of presentations.

Best Practice for Lectures: University of Missouri-Kansas City SOM FMIG

Exam Prep Lecture

The FMIG invited a faculty member from the Learning Center on their campus to come and speak about test-taking skills and test anxiety topics before exam season. This was a topic that appealed to more than just students in the FMIG.

Clinical Skills (Procedures Workshops): These workshops give students an opportunity to learn and practice procedural skills. Your FMIG may want to recruit some residents to help with the demonstrations and to act as patients, if needed. There are several different types of workshops, these are listed below.

- Family Medicine procedures workshop – blood pressure; ear, nose and throat exam; heart sounds, x-rays; casting and splinting; and suturing
- Topical procedures workshop – maternity care: pelvic exam, birth control counseling, prenatal blood pressure

- Public health – immunizations, HIV/AIDS counseling, blood pressure
- Oral health- incorporating oral health exams into primary care office visits—Miles of Smiles curriculum.

Social Activities

- Match dinner – have 4th year medical student who matched into FM residency programs come to a dinner with younger students.
- Bowling, Movie Night, or Sporting Event attendance
- Faculty sponsored dinners- many faculty members will support dinners at their homes for FMIG members
- Retreats: many FMIGs will plan off-site retreats for students and family medicine faculty members so that they are able to bond outside of the medical school
- Holiday Parties and Special Event Luncheons

Best Practice for Social Activities: East Tennessee State University SOM FMIG

Student/Resident Whitewater Rafting Adventure down the Nolichucky River

One of the FMIG Faculty Advisors at ETSU arranges this trip each year for FMIG members. Students spend an entire day on the river learning to raft as well as engaging in team building activities. The group is treated to a steak dinner after the day of river rafting.

Mentoring

Exposure to a positive family medicine mentor is a major reason many family physicians cite for choosing the specialty as a career. Mentoring can occur both formally or informally and in many different settings, not just clinical. Many FMIGs undertake mentoring activities to help students gain a personal understanding of the specialty from another perspective. Structured mentoring programs may take a lot of faculty and departmental buy-in without a lot of qualitative data regarding the outcomes. The program must fit the needs of students and faculty at your institution. Some different examples of mentoring programs include the following:

- Family Medicine Faculty members paired with medical students for mentoring
- M3/M4 medical students paired with M1/M2 students for mentoring
- Medical Students paired with undergraduate students for mentoring
- Residents paired with medical students for mentoring
- Interest based mentoring: i.e. research faculty paired with medical students interested research

Best Practice for Mentoring: OSU College of Medicine FMIG Mentorship Program

The Mentorship Program is a formalized mentorship program with a matching system between medical students and family physicians. Over the years, the program has expanded significantly. Now preclinical students are also matched with clinical students to serve as mentors to help them get through USMLE board examinations, student life, etc. With the growing strength of our Residency Connection, we are now able to provide clinical students with family medicine residents enthusiastically willing to serve as mentors. In partnership with our FMIG's Pre-medicine Initiative (PMI), we are also able to provide Ohio State undergrads with medical student and physician mentors. Thus our FMIG serves as the central hub for a cascading mentorship program that serves to connect undergrads, medical students, family medicine residents, and family physicians.

For Ohio State medical students, the mentorship process begins with an open meeting for all first years interested in obtaining a mentor. These students meet with the mentorship chair and an advisor who discuss what the program is about. Students are then asked to complete an information sheet to learn more about what their goals are and if they have any special interests within the field of family medicine such as sports medicine. Once this has occurred, our mentorship advisor meets individually with the students and personally selects a physician from those willing to give of their time and talents in the Columbus area. We are very lucky to have Dr. Benita Petri as our advisor again this year. She has been a phenomenal resource in helping advertise the program to students, recruit mentors, and coordinate the matching process.

Once a student is matched with a mentor, the student is then asked to contact the mentor(s) and set up the initial meeting. Many mentorship pairs meet over lunch and discuss the student's career goals, challenges in medicine, starting in practice and any other topics the student wishes to discuss. From there the student and mentor decide what their mentoring relationship will look like. Some students choose to shadow their mentors, while others meet periodically outside of the clinic setting. The students gain a valuable mentor, while the family physician shares his or her passion for their field. This program takes up to 20 students a year.

Choosing and Scheduling Events

Choosing events for the FMIG calendar is easier if the student leaders start with:

- A planning session at least at the beginning of each semester (or earlier)
- A comparison of ideas with the FMIG mission or goals statement
- A comparison with the previous year's schedule to determine what continues, what is replaced, or what is added

Choosing Events

You can help the student leaders stay on track and achieve their potential in choosing activities by asking the following questions:

- How does the planning meet the FMIG's overall missions and goals?
- How many activities per semester would be reasonable?
- Is there any organization with which you would like to partner for any activities?
- Is there funding available for any activities?
- Is there an AAFP initiative that could help direct planning, content or provide funding?
- Do any officers have a passion for pursuing a particular activity, whether or not it has been done before?
- How will the student leadership be sharing responsibility for activities and who is in charge of each event?

You should ask yourself the following questions and decide if you wish to caution the student leadership with regard to the workload that is being planned (or encourage them to do more), or if you wish to advise the approach to an activity in a different way.

- Does the FMIG have the person-power to succeed in the semester's planned activity?
- Are the resources sufficient to assure success?
- Are the activities too complex, or too simple, in organization?
- Are there partners that can bring person-power or resources to make planning and execution easier?

Considering partners is an important consideration and can often make the difference between holding the event and not being able to do so. These partners may include the department, its faculty, its staff, the residency program, other nearby residency programs, another student organization, a state or regional AHEC (Area Health Education Center), the state academy of

family physicians, or the AAFP. It is important that you know what can be brought to the table. If you are not aware of the resources that might be available from these potential partners, it might be wise for you to investigate. Partners also often make it possible to expand the scope of the activity, and may develop win-win situations in which relationship building occurs between organizations.

Scheduling Events

The time when an activity is scheduled can have a significant effect on attendance and student interest. Student leaders might not realize this unless you are paying attention to the larger medical school calendar. Factors to consider in scheduling are:

- When are students free? (Typically this means avoiding times before exams and trying to schedule at the beginning of a semester.)
- What time of day is best? (In some settings lunchtime is best; in others, a dinner or evening meeting might be better.)
- Is the activity better held on campus or off? (Do you want to treat the attendees to a dinner meeting at a restaurant in the community or meet at the home of a faculty member? Do you think the convenience of staying on campus will increase attendance?)
- Can the material being presented be connected to curricular instruction? (A differential diagnosis presentation topic could be tied to the organ system being studied by the second year class, or a physical examination skills session could be presented before an OSCE.)
- If you are partnering with another organization, does that organization's schedule need to be taken into account in coordinating the event?

Assisting student leaders in choosing and scheduling events is a very important advisor function. It can make a significant difference in quality and success of the FMIG activities and maintain the students' sense of assurance and confidence.

Administrative Support

Many FMIGs are supported through the family medicine department, academic advising office, or student support services by an administrative coordinator or support person.

All evolutionary stages of the FMIG (early, intermediate, and mature) need administrative support. Some types of administrative support are needed at all stages and some types of support are more essential at specific stages. FMIGs at the early stage of evolution may need more personal outreach to other students and faculty to launch programs and activities. A written budget may need to be submitted to the department chair for funding. At later stages, administrative support will be needed to make sure that existing programs are successful.

In planning administrative support for the FMIG, advisors have options: do everything themselves, delegate everything to the students, delegate everything to an administrative assistant in their departments, or do a combination of the above. The last option is highly recommended.

Students can:

- Communicate information to the Regional Coordinators and the FMIG members at their schools
- Propose an annual calendar of activities and a budget
- Suggest program topics, contact speakers, create publicity flyers, plan and implement fundraising activities

Students and/or an administrative assistant can:

- Update an annual calendar of activities
- Arrange for meeting room reservations and food ordering
- Sign up for the FMIG Faculty Advisor Listserv so that they are up to date on national information

If an administrative assistant is enthusiastic about working with the FMIG, this is a bonus and he or she should be included in as many activities and decisions as possible. Personal investment in the FMIG by an administrative assistant can be a major factor in reducing FMIG advisor burnout.

The FMIG advisor must:

- Personally prepare (or at least read) any reports sent to the AAFP about the FMIG to assure accuracy
- Personally review budgetary status of the FMIG and approve major expenses
- Correspond with FMIG colleagues nationally on the FMIG Faculty Advisor email list (Listserv)
- Correspond with the state academy about needs and accomplishments of the FMIG

Administrative support may be needed for students attending the state academy meeting and the National Conference. This should be planned well ahead of the deadlines for registration, especially if housing or travel plans need to be made. Students, administrative assistants and FMIG advisors should all be involved in this process.

Building Relationships with Other Stakeholders

Relationships with other groups/institutions are an important part of any successful FMIG. As the student leaders of the FMIG change from year to year, the FMIG Faculty Advisor can be a source of continuity for these relationships and add credibility to requests from students to these organizations. One way to try to determine how an outside organization can help the FMIG is to look at that particular organization's mission and goals. Finding areas in which the request of the FMIG meets or is in line with those goals will help to forge a positive and rewarding relationship for both parties.

Following are some explanations and examples of how these different organizations can of value to the FMIG:

Family Medicine Residency Programs (FMRP)

The goal of a FMRP in interacting with students is to recruit the best future residents. Residency programs want "face time" with students to show how dynamic and interesting they are and to try and entice students to come to their program. Family Medicine Residencies are great resources for many of the types of things the FMIG wants.

Didactics – Residency programs love to send a faculty member and/or residents to give a talk on almost any topic to the FMIG. Each residency program will have their particular areas of "expertise" for a lecture, but if your group is looking for a particular topic most residency programs will find a way to meet your need. This is also a great way to obtain interactive workshops on exam techniques and procedures for the students as these types of presentations allow residency programs to show a little more to the students than just a lecture.

Hands-on Experiences – Most residency programs are also able to have students come and spend some time with some of their physicians to see what Family Medicine is all about. Residency programs like to "show off" their office, especially if they feel they have some unique aspects to highlight: great office set-up, EMR, team atmosphere, interesting procedures, etc.

Resources – Some residency programs will be able to provide the FMIG with certain resources such as space to hold meetings, instrumentation and supplies, or possibly even funding/support. This will vary widely depending on the financial setting of the residency and hospital with which that residency is connected. Residency programs can also provide speakers on topics of Family Medicine that might not be available in the medical school. Residency programs might offer fellowships in a variety of topics, or the viewpoint of residency program interviews from the residency director perspective.

Community Physicians

Community physicians can be a great resource for the FMIG also. In keeping with the theme of goals, the main goal of a community physician is to bring patients into their practice. Many community Family Physicians are also interested in attracting students to the field of Family Medicine. This is where goals align. While it is unlikely that talking to an FMIG will increase patients in a private community practice, it is a great way to introduce the field of Family Medicine and garner interest.

Didactics – Students are interested not only in the medicine side of a career, but also in the personal and financial aspects. Community physicians can speak well on both topics. Having a doctor in the community talk to the FMIG can convey the passion that one has as a Family Physician. They can also discuss topics like quality of life, flexibility of a career, and income.

Hands-on Experiences – Community Family Medicine physicians who are passionate about their work and enjoy what they do are great resources for shadowing experiences for students. These physicians tend to like to “show off” what they do, how they do it, and why they are successful.

A word of caution does need to be stated: Choose your community physician carefully. Some are more passionate and much better than others at conveying the message that you are looking for in an appropriate manner. Community physicians may also be a great resource to demonstrate the scope of practice inherent in family medicine, and could be chosen to discuss, for example, the incorporation of obstetrics and women's health,

sports medicine, or school health in a practice. Some state academies can provide speaker's lists of members to assist in seeking and choosing community based speakers

AHECs and other organizations

AHECs are Area Health Education Centers. The mission of the AHEC, according to the group's website, is to enhance access to quality health care, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals through community/academic educational partnerships. Essentially this can be thought of as health care for underserved populations. As with the other groups mentioned above, AHECs are looking to attract students to primary care fields and specifically to caring for the underserved. They also love to send people out to talk to students about what they do and how it is a very fulfilling way to practice medicine.

For more information about AHECs visit: www.nationalahec.org

Didactics – Many students have philanthropic ideals coming into medical school. Talks about altruism in practice are very well received and most students do not have knowledge about this side of medicine as a career.

Hands-on Experiences – Similarly to the residency programs and community physicians, AHECs enjoy having students spend time in their facilities learning about their style of practice and can be a great resource for shadowing opportunities for students. The physicians who work in AHECs find serving the underserved populations very rewarding and fulfilling, and having students see this first-hand can be a great way to increase interest in primary care.

Other organizations – As the FMIG Advisor you should think “outside the box” when it comes to opportunities and relationships for the FMIG. Building relationships with outside companies/institutions can help to diversify the experiences of the FMIG. Legal professionals can talk about issues regarding malpractice and appropriate documentation, and those involved with medicine usually have some very interesting and thought-provoking

examples to bring with them. Prison physicians are often very interesting speakers and may be able to have students shadow them and see what they do. Corporations who have designated primary care medical personnel can potentially provide resources and other practical opportunities to see another way to practice medicine. Financial advisors are also great speakers for groups to discuss issues like life insurance, disability insurance, and saving for one's future.

One additional aspect to building relationships with different groups is the ability to hold a panel session for the students. This involves inviting people from different backgrounds (residency faculty, community physician, AHEC, other) to come at the same time and have a discussion with the students. It can be very educational for students to hear how these individuals answer the same question in a different way in this format.

Your students should also pursue opportunities to collaborate with other campus groups, like individual chapters of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) or even other primary care groups, like the Pediatrics Interest Group, to reach a larger student audience.

Many more opportunities for relationships exist and you will need to know your area and the resources available to you in order to determine the types of relationships you can develop.