

Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG) Program of Excellence Award Winners

Overall Award

East Tennessee State University-Quillen College of Medicine

FMIG Operation

The ETSU Quillen College of Medicine Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG) operates under a three-level leadership structure designed to foster collaboration across all classes and provide meaningful leadership opportunities.

1. The Executive Board - composed of second-year medical students and include the following positions with their respective responsibilities:

- President: Leads the FMIG by setting long-term goals, serving as the primary liaison with faculty, and coordinating major events. The President is also responsible for membership growth, increasing engagement, and delegating tasks among the team.

- Vice President: Supports the President in managing short-term goals, assists with event planning and group coordination, and serves as an additional point of contact for members and collaborators.

- Community Outreach Coordinator: facilitates group engagement with the broader community beyond Quillen, including pre-medical students, other FMIGs, and both state and national AAFP chapters.

- Volunteer Coordinator: Oversees volunteer initiatives, identifies new opportunities for service, tracks total volunteer impact/hours, and helps oversee the M1 ambassador positions.

- Secretary: Manages group communications and documentation, including maintaining meeting minutes and coordinating email and GroupMe correspondence.

2. Upperclassman Advisor(s) (M3/M4) - held by former FMIG executive board member(s) who now serves as a mentor and advisor. The advisor helps with leadership transitions and

provides guidance based on past experience. This position allows M3/M4 students to stay involved in FMIG leadership with a flexible commitment, given their demanding clinical schedules.

3. M1 Ambassadors - First-year medical students can apply to serve as ambassadors, gaining leadership experience with a manageable level of responsibility as they adjust to the transition into medical school. Each ambassador helps plan and support select ongoing events. Current M1 Ambassador positions include Anatomy on Display, Church Hill Free Clinic, Community Garden, Alzheimer's Tennessee, Ready, Set, Fit & Nutrition, Meet the Doctor, Donate Life, and Habitat for Humanity.

Goals

Mission Statement:

The mission of East Tennessee State University - Quillen College of Medicine's Family Medicine Interest Group, is to promote the values of Family Medicine through service, education, and leadership. We aim to provide opportunities for students to engage with their community, connect with family medicine physicians, and build skills that will support their growth as future physicians—especially those serving in rural primary care settings.

Goals:

1. Promote Awareness of Family Medicine: Increase student understanding of the breadth, flexibility, and impact of family medicine as a field.
2. Foster Connections: Provide opportunities for mentorship with family medicine physicians, residents, and leaders.
3. Support Rural & Underserved Medicine: Emphasize rural and underserved care and highlight the unique challenges and rewards of caring for underserved populations in Appalachia and beyond.
3. Develop Skills: Host workshops and events that help students develop new skills or strengthen existing ones to support their career.
4. Encourage Leadership and Advocacy: Encourage and create opportunities for students to take on leadership roles and advocate for patients, healthcare, and the field of family medicine.
5. Engage in Community Service: Organize service projects that allow students to contribute meaningfully to their local community.
6. Participate with the AAFP & TNAFP: Maintain active communication and participation with national and state family medicine organizations and the broader family medicine community.
7. Champion the Human Side of Medicine: Always remember and stress the importance of compassion, empathy, and understanding within medicine.

Faculty Advisor

Our FMIG is supported by three dedicated faculty advisors, all of whom are family medicine physicians. One serves as the Director of Rural and Community Programs, another as the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, and the third as the Family Medicine Clerkship Director. These advisors provide invaluable guidance and support for both our leadership team and our general FMIG members. The officer team meets with them periodically to discuss goals, brainstorm ideas, and coordinate events/opportunities. They also often actively participate in events themselves whether it be through teaching, sitting on panels, or connecting us with colleagues/residents.

We are also fortunate to have an amazing staff supporter who works behind the scenes to keep our FMIG running smoothly. She plays a crucial role in promoting events across the classes and ensuring that information and opportunities are widely shared. Her support involves helping with event logistics, coordinating finances/funds, scheduling, and much more. She also ensures that meals are appropriately ordered with dietary needs in mind and that spaces for events are reserved.

Our FMIG advisors and supporters help us endlessly and are the cog that keeps our group moving forward.

Programs

Alzheimer's Tennessee

Our ongoing Alzheimer's Tennessee volunteer initiative aims to connect medical students with residents in local nursing homes who are living with dementia in an engaging and meaningful way. We have two primary goals: to give students valuable experience working with this patient population and to provide enjoyable, enriching experiences for the residents. We host at least one event each month, spending a few hours with residents and participating in hands-on activities together. Some of our favorite events have included creating personalized flower arrangements, making various holidays decorations, puzzle and board game days, and even making glass mosaics. One of the most memorable activities was a 1940s–1960s-themed musical bingo. Based on the residents' reactions, I'm convinced Elvis might be a secret cure for dementia. These events have been made possible through our partnership with Alzheimer's Tennessee, with whom we've coordinated closely through their volunteer and event director. Throughout the year, a dedicated group of student volunteers, ranging from 6-12 students, helped make each activity a success. The feedback we've received has been overwhelmingly positive—not only from the Alzheimer's Tennessee team and our FMIG members, but most importantly, from the residents themselves. Seeing their joy and continued engagement has truly reinforced the importance of this program. Looking ahead, we hope to expand by introducing new event ideas and partnering with additional nursing homes (we recently held our first event at a new location, which we hope to include in our regular rotation). Our goal is to continue strengthening our relationship with Alzheimer's Tennessee and to foster even more meaningful connections between our students and these often-overlooked members of our community.

Treating Addiction in Family Medicine

Partnering with our school's Addiction Medicine Interest Group, we hosted our first-ever Treating Addiction in Family Medicine event. We were honored to welcome the director of ETSU's Addiction Medicine Fellowship, who gave an engaging presentation on this subspecialty of family medicine and the unique program offered at ETSU. Given our location in Southern Appalachia, substance use disorder is a pressing and prevalent issue. It's something that all family

physicians, regardless of where they practice, will encounter, but especially so in our region. The session covered both the fellowship pathway and practical information on the use of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder. As a marginalized and often underserved population, patients struggling with addiction face numerous barriers to receiving consistent and compassionate care. Our session highlighted some of these challenges through case reports presented by current family medicine residents working with the addiction medicine team. Through events like this, we hope to raise awareness and enhance our FMIG members' ability to care for individuals with substance use disorders in their future practices.

Ronald McDonald House

Over the past year, we have started a new relationship with the Southern Appalachian Ronald McDonald House, where we have hosted several meals for families staying there. With our medical school located next to a children's hospital that serves a large rural region, many parents of hospitalized children rely on the Ronald McDonald House for support. Our goal in getting involved was to simply help prepare and serve comforting meals to these families, offering them one less thing to worry about during a hard time. To make these events possible, we reached out to local businesses and grocery stores for donations and supplemented with some of our group funds to cover ingredient costs. At each event, students prepared and served meals, including a standout brunch featuring pancakes, French toast, yogurt parfaits, scrambled eggs, bacon, biscuits, sausage, and fresh fruit. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Students often ask when the next event will be, and participation has been so enthusiastic that we've had to cap attendance at 10 students per event to ensure there's enough space in the kitchen. The staff and families also consistently express their appreciation. Overall, we believe this initiative captures the heart of family medicine. Great family physicians recognize that nonmedical factors such as food insecurity, emotional stress, and location can significantly impact one's health. This initiative gives students firsthand experience with these challenges and promotes community-based care that defines family medicine. Until now, our involvement has been limited by funding and the generosity of local supermarkets. However, we recently secured \$1,000 through an award we won in a local competition hosted by the Frontier Health Foundation. With this support, we hope to host many more meals.

Myths and Facts About Being a Family Medicine Physician

For several years now, Quillen's FMIG has hosted an event titled "Myths and Facts About Being a Family Medicine Physician," where local family medicine doctors come to campus to share the "inside scoop" on what it's really like to work in the field. While this event has consistently done well, this year we sought to expand its impact by also reaching out to undergraduate students who may be interested in medicine. We realized that in addition to dispelling myths about family medicine, we could also address common misconceptions about medical school and medicine in general. To do this, we partnered with the ETSU EQUIP Program, which supports undergraduate students from rural backgrounds in pursuing a medical education. We also connected with various undergraduate pre-medical organization. During the event, five local family medicine physicians addressed common myths about the specialty and corrected misconceptions with facts and personal experiences. Each physician also made themselves available for continued mentorship by offering their contact information after the session. The goals of this session were to spark interest in family medicine among prospective students, dispel misinformation across all levels of medical education, provide insight into the realities of family medicine, and foster connections between premedical students, EQUIP students, current medical students, and practicing physicians. The event took significant planning and coordination—getting five physicians in the same place at the same time felt like aligning the stars. Our officer team reached out to doctors, the EQUIP administration, undergraduate clubs, and Quillen students, while our FMIG Advisors helped organize catering and reserve a space. The final turnout included 20 students in person and another 15 attending via Zoom. We consider

the event a success based on strong participation across educational levels and high audience engagement, and we hope it was an evening of encouragement, honesty, and connection.

FMIG/TNAFP Welcome Event

As our incoming M1 class begins their medical education, we host a welcome event near orientation to not only introduce them to FMIG but also encourage early consideration of family medicine and involvement in our group. During this event, we introduce our faculty advisors and the newly elected officers, provide information on the ambassador positions available to M1s, and explain how to apply. After a brief Q&A session, one of our family medicine faculty members, a dean and former president of the AAFP, delivered an informative talk about family medicine and primary care. This event has consistently seen high participation from first-year students, who are often eager to get involved. This year, we expanded the welcome into a two-day event. On the second day, we provided lunch and shifted the focus to be on the AAFP and the TNAFP. To strengthen our chapter's connection to the state-level organization, we invited leaders from the TNAFP to speak with students about the current state of family medicine in Tennessee, the advantages of practicing in-state, and the ways TNAFP can support students, residents, and future providers. The overarching goal of this second event was to foster connection between medical students and their state chapter while providing valuable insight, resources, and leadership opportunities. The two-day event was evaluated as a success based on strong attendance, high levels of engagement, and a significant number of applications for M1 ambassador roles. Additionally, we were excited to learn that several students signed up for both AAFP and TNAFP memberships. In the future, we hope to welcome TNAFP leadership to our campus again as new students enter Quillen, continuing to reinforce the connection between medical students and our state and national family medicine organizations.

Life Donation Campaign

What began as a one-off event last year, our Life Donation Campaign has grown into a major ongoing initiative. It started with a two-day tabling event aimed at raising awareness about organ donation. Partnering with DonateLife Tennessee, we advocated for the importance of organ donation, educated students on its impact/need, and provided the opportunity for individuals to register on the spot using an approved app, with volunteers guiding them through the process. The event was both impactful and enjoyable as we had the chance to engage with students from the main undergraduate campus, whom we don't often see, and distribute branded merchandise to promote donation awareness. Following this initial event, we were contacted by another organization and expanded our efforts to include a marrow donation drive in partnership with the Gift of Life National Registry. During this event, we raised awareness for marrow donation as well as helping several students swab their cheeks to register. It was inspiring to witness so many young individuals wishing to be someone's match and potentially save a life. We also launched a t-shirt fundraiser, with one of our officers designing dozens of custom shirts to sell in support of our local Kidney Walk. The effort raised \$830, which we proudly donated to the National Kidney Foundation during the event. What began as a way to expose FMIG members to the realities of certain diseases and the importance of advocacy has grown into something much more meaningful. This campaign reflects the broad scope of family medicine. Whether it's managing a chronic illness that progresses to the point of requiring a transplant or addressing a sudden life-threatening condition that can only be treated through someone else's kind act, family medicine has a critical role—not only in providing care, but also in advocating.

Suture Workshop

Shortly after holding an FMIG officer meeting to brainstorm ideas for a skills workshop, the M2 class attended a panel

featuring the directors of our various clerkships. During the discussion, the Surgery clerkship director mentioned that students should be familiar with several suturing techniques prior to starting the rotation. However, due to the recent shortening of Quillen's preclinical curriculum, most formal suturing instruction had been significantly reduced. The timing of this panel and our workshop planning session couldn't have been better, and it gave us a clear idea for the subject of our next event. We organized a suturing workshop and welcomed over 30 students for an evening of pizza, instruction, hands-on-practice, and pig feet. We used donated suturing materials to practice on synthetic skin models and pig feet obtained from local supermarkets, which offer a more realistic representation of human skin. We even had enough supplies for students to take supplies home for additional practice. Our FMIG faculty advisors, along with several upper classmen, provided one-on-one instruction and guidance throughout the evening. The event was both fun and educational, and based on the feedback we received, students across all specialty interests found it beneficial. While this workshop was designed to address a gap that we saw, particularly relevant to surgical specialties, suturing is also an important skill in family medicine. Many students expressed appreciation for the opportunity and were surprised to hear how often the family medicine doctors present used this skill in their practice.

After Medical School Series

When initially discussing events for the year, we wanted to be sure to include programming specifically geared toward our upperclassmen members. The QCOM FMIG, like most other interest groups here, has a tendency to favor underclassmen. To address this, we had the idea for a string of events focused on those approaching graduation we loosely called the "After Medical School Series." One of our events in this series was a Lunch & Learn on student loan repayment. In the past, FMIG has hosted a session on personal finances led by the school's financial services department, and we thought a similar, more loan repayment targeted, event would be beneficial. This session focused on strategies for loan repayment post-graduation and included a detailed overview of forgiveness programs at the state and federal levels, as well as options specific to family medicine, primary care, and military service. The event was particularly relevant given Quillen's rural primary care mission, and many of our FMIG members planning to pursue such practices. The session had a strong turnout, with students from all class years attending, and several requesting copies of the slides afterward. While compensation shouldn't dictate one's specialty choice, it undeniably plays a role, and we felt this event helped highlight the financial support systems available. The second event in our series was a residency interview prep session held the week before interview season began. This idea came about through conversations with one of our FMIG advisors, who noted the stress many students were feeling around interviews. To mitigate this, we organized an informal evening event with food and guidance from faculty from all three ETSU family medicine residency programs. These faculty members not only shared practical interview advice and common pitfalls to avoid, but also offered encouragement to help calm nerves. Because they are directly involved in interviewing applicants for their programs, and many of our attendees were applying to those very residencies, the insights shared were especially relevant and appreciated.

Youth Outreach Program

With family medicine often described as caring for patients "from cradle to grave," our FMIG has a dedicated Youth Outreach Program consisting of ongoing volunteer initiatives aimed at engaging local youth. M1 ambassadors play a vital role in organizing these events, and they're always a fun and rewarding experience for everyone involved. The events cover a variety of themes, all centered around learning in an interactive way. One of our most popular themes is anatomy, where we bring preserved specimens from our cadaver lab to teach school-aged children about the human body and encourage interest in medicine. We partner with several local schools and organizations, including the Carver Rec Center and Coalition for Kids. At one event, over 400 children rotated through our station set up in the gymnasium.

One particularly observant student even noticed a prior procedure on the heart specimen we displayed! Other outreach themes include fitness and nutrition, where we set up interactive stations to introduce students to various forms of physical activity and teach them how diet and exercise impact overall health. Lastly, we also host events with a general doctoring theme where we bring physical exam tools and teach the kids what each one is used for. We then let them try the tools out on us and each other, and at the end, they get to wear a white coat and “be a doctor” for a few minutes—something they love as much as we enjoy watching. Overall, our Youth Outreach Program is not only a meaningful break from our studies, but also a valuable way to connect with the community, gain experience interacting with a population we’ll likely serve as family physicians, and possibly help ease the fear many children have of going to the doctor.