

Development and Implementation of a Value-Added Role - the 4th Year

Medical Student Chief



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Background

Process

Next Steps

Value-added roles for medical students have been discussed and implemented in various ways to include students as educators, peer supporters, clinical extenders, service-learning experiences, and system-based projects.¹⁻²

The concept of a fourth year Medical Student Chief (MSC) has been introduced nationally and can serve as a bridge between undergraduate medical education (UME) learners and faculty and as a gateway to those interested in academic medicine and their future roles as educators.³ This builds on students' roles as near-peer educators and mentors to junior students, as well as an introduction to administrative and curricular development arenas.

At Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM), an MSC role was developed and piloted in the Pediatric Department for the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

Objectives

The aims of this pilot project are to:

- Enhance opportunities to develop leadership skills and foster academic interest for fourth year UME learners serving as MSCs.
- Develop learner competencies as near-peer educators, mentors, and advocates in medical education.
- Catalyze transition to residency skills and accelerate the growth of residency-level competencies.
- Foster professional identity formation through serving as a liaison with UME learners and faculty.

Process Step 1

- Examine scholarly literature focused on utilization of fourth year medical students in the Chief role.
- Employing Kolb's Learning Cycle and Hidden Curriculum as theoretical frameworks, developed a plan-of-action based on a combination of best practices framework identified by other MSC programs and in alignment with VTCSOM learner needs.⁴⁻⁵

Process Step 2

- Recruited three medical students planning to pursue a Pediatric Residency to serve as pilot MSCs.
- Captured feedback to identify areas of need for third-year Pediatric Clerkship.

Process Step 3

- MSCs implemented the following core components of the role:
 - MSC on call for peer support.
 - MSC present at each orientation introduction.
 - Creation of clerkship documentation to improve opportunities for success.
- Quarterly meetings with Clerkship leadership to act as liaison for student concerns.

Process Step 4

- Compile informal feedback to inform modifications to each level of the MSC program.

Informal feedback suggests the MSC role increases access to resources for third-year UME learners rotating through their Pediatric Clerkship. The MSC role has demonstrated an opportunity for UME learners to develop leadership, teaching, and administrative competencies necessary for transition into residency and later as physicians working within academic medicine.

1

- Survey development, pre- and post-, to assess the impact of the MSC role on third and fourth-year student experience rotating through Pediatrics. Evaluate preparedness and support for the third-year medical student Pediatric Clerkship rotation.

2

- Develop reflection piece for MSC experiences in the role. perceptions of skill development, challenges for the fourth-year medical student chief. Utilize mini-focus group model.

3

- Adapt the MSC role to ensure opportunities for leadership skill development and organization awareness. Addin AAMC leadership modules?

4

- Solidify selection process with a written application and panel review by Clerkship leaders to ascertain students with strong academic interest who best match the MSC role requirements.

5

- Develop program as a "for credit" longitudinal elective through VTCSOM.

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