ADVANCING POCUS PROFICIENCY IN FAMILY MEDICINE EDUCATORS: A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF THE STFM FM POCUS EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Summary
The STFM FM POCUS Educator Certificate Program presents a strategic initiative to elevate proficiency in Point-of-Care Ultrasound (POCUS) among family medicine educators. This 5-year SMART initiative aims to train 75 educators, ensuring each POCUS workshop is consistently filled beyond 90%, and achieving a high satisfaction rate of over 85% among module completers. The program anticipates that more than 80% of certificate participants will integrate the POCUS curriculum within a year of completion.

Certificate Program Overview
The certificate program uniquely emphasizes not only POCUS training but also pedagogical strategies for effective POCUS instruction. Combining hands-on experiences with online learning, the program supports faculty in navigating institutional credentialing processes. Participants engage in 3 POCUS workshops, complete a series of teaching-focused and content-based POCUS modules, and benefit from mentorship, image portfolio reviews, and a comprehensive assessment at program completion.

Certificate Requirements
1. Workshop component: attend 3 POCUS workshops
2. Online modules: complete STFM teaching-focused and content-based POCUS modules
3. Mentorship: engage with assigned POCUS mentors virtually
4. Image portfolio: upload images for feedback
5. Assessment: successfully pass written and in-person skills exams

Target Audience
This program is designed for family medicine faculty at residency programs.

Certificate Knowledge Objectives
Upon completion, participants will master essential aspects of POCUS, including utility and scope, application basics, clinical indications, limitations, overcoming barriers, billing and credentialing, curriculum implementation, effective preceptorship, imaging informatics, and communication/documentation strategies. The program ensures a comprehensive understanding of different ultrasound devices, including hand-holds.

The STFM FM POCUS Educator Certificate Program emerges as a pivotal resource, poised to empower family medicine educators in delivering high-quality POCUS instruction within their respective programs.

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THE CHALLENGES OF EXTERNAL LETTERS FOR PROMOTION: ACADEMIC FAMILY MEDICINE’S ATTEMPTS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE

Academic promotion to the Associate Professor and Professor rank has traditionally required external letters of review from colleagues who are not personally connected to the individual being considered for promotion (“arm’s length”). Helping our family medicine colleagues achieve academic promotion is important. While we believe that the faculty promotion process ought to be rigorous, the “arm’s-length” letter of review is both burdensome and out of date. This process creates numerous challenges and inefficiencies for both those seeking promotion as well as those attempting to support their colleagues. Members of both ADFM and STFM have requested support for some of the nuanced challenges created by this process. Below, we describe ADFM and STFM strategies to support their memberships with these challenges, as well as an idea to consider for institutional advocacy.

The Challenge of Finding Enough People Willing to Write External Letters
The idea of creating a sort of “letter writers’ bureau” has been raised several times over recent years to STFM. A similar structure exists in emergency medicine.1 In the spring of 2022, STFM agreed to pilot a voluntary letter writers’ bureau, modeled after the emergency medicine example, through the STFM Faculty Development Collaborative. To date, 69 individuals have volunteered to write letters through the letter