



# Texas OPTI



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## *Our Mission*

*Texas OPTI is an educational consortium committed to assuring the advancement of osteopathic postdoctoral training.*

*In fulfillment of that commitment we enhance osteopathic graduate medical education through quality program development and advocacy on behalf of our interns, residents, fellows and member institutions.*

3500 Camp Bowie Boulevard • EAD-426 • Fort Worth, Texas 76107

Phone: 817.735.2149 • Fax: 817.735.2330 • Online: <http://texasopti.hsc.unt.edu> • Editor: Eryn Loney, M.L.A.



## **This month...**

We're focusing on residents teaching medical students. In a fast-paced daily environment, how do residents successfully teach students? How do they impart wisdom, positive role modeling, and leadership skills in the midst of their own busy schedules? Helene Alphonso, D.O. from JPS shares her thoughts with us...

## ***Residents Teaching Medical Students***

Someone once summarized clinical education as 'see one, do one, teach one.' Every resident is a teacher at some point in their career. 'It has been estimated that first-year residents devote approximately 10% of their time to teaching, while senior-level residents may spend as much as 70% of their time teaching, a high proportion of which is informal role modeling.' Residents as Teachers: A Guide to Educational Practice, T.L. Schwenk & N. Whitman (1993). 'The importance of the teaching role of the resident is undisputed. Medical students, interns, and program directors agree that students and interns on ward rotations gain more knowledge from their residents than from their attending physicians.' (Spickard, Wenger & Corbett, 1996.) Because of this trust in their upper level residents, one must be cautious of continuing medical practice habits because of habit, and be sure to use an evidence base in teaching students.

'Evidence suggests that many residents teach ineffectively....**they rarely cited literature, asked questions, or gave feedback to their learners**--all teaching behaviors found to be highly effective in the faculty development literature.' (Morrison, 2000.) Fortunately medical specialty organizations have compiled algorithms and guidelines which are readily available online. Residents teaching medical students should be sure to review and reiterate these guidelines as an evidence based beginning of the therapeutic process. They can then give a case example or use a patient seen on rounds as that example to show how guidelines are applied in vivo. Often practice does not exactly follow guidelines, and an exploration of treatment options with a risk benefit assessment of each is necessary.

Medicine is an *art* and teaching art can prove challenging. By utilizing accepted practice guidelines and explaining the thought process behind medical decision making, residents can learn as they teach, and be sure to pass on accurate information to their peers and medical students. 'To teach is to learn twice.'

*Helene Alphonso, D.O. is Associate Director of Osteopathic Medical Education at JPS Health Network in Fort Worth*

## *Resident Teaching Initiatives*

Regardless of what skills you possess prior to residency, it's important to take advantage of the opportunities available to improve your teaching skills during training. Whether a resident is planning an academic or community-based career is irrelevant. Teaching patients, colleagues and/or students will always be a part of your daily work. Thus, finding ways to improve our teaching skills can only benefit your future careers. During your junior years of training, it is important to find occasions to improve presentation and communication skills. Receiving and giving regular feedback should also be an integral part of a resident's skills set. When on call, residents should teach medical students interview and diagnostic skills. Though not always possible because of work demands, quiet moments on call do occur and can be used to practice teaching skills. As residents make the transition to their senior years, they may wish to make use of formal teaching opportunities. As well, residents should seek regular feedback from students and colleagues about their teaching style and areas for improvement. The best opinion on teaching skills will surely come from students. Finally, there are online resources where residents can rate the characteristics of their ideal teacher and compare themselves to that model.

It is important that residents improve their teaching skills during residency. Teaching is an integral part of medicine, and no matter what type of career a resident chooses, the skills developed in that area will be an asset. Areas of interest for future research or development include the benefit of formalized training programs for resident teachers, the usefulness of involving senior residents in teaching their junior colleagues and the long-term results of improving teaching skills over the lifetime of the physician.

*Adapted from Teacher or Student: The Resident's Role in Teaching at the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Level*



**Helpful Hint:** Be prepared to take advantage of 'teachable moments' that occur throughout the day at unscheduled times and in unscheduled locations.

### **Save the Date!**

**AOASM Clinical Conference**  
March 30th-April 2nd

**ACOI Board Review**  
April 1st-5th

**AACOM Annual Meeting**  
April 15th-18th

**AODME Annual Meeting**  
April 22nd-25th

**ACOR Mid-Year Conference**  
April 24th-26th

### **Are You Teaching Your Students Effectively?**

- Are you stating your expectations clearly and concisely?
- Are you communicating more than just work routines?
- Have you identified specific learning objectives for the team?
- Are you soliciting information and ideas from your students?
- Do your students feel comfortable asking you questions?
- Have you established a positive learning environment?
- Are your students motivated and eager to learn new material?

**DO Online Trainee Resources— [www.do-online.org](http://www.do-online.org)**

### **Texas OPTI Members**

Bay Area Medical Center \* Driscoll Children's Hospital \* JPS Health Network  
Methodist Charlton Medical Center \* Plaza Medical Center of Fort Worth  
San Jacinto Methodist Hospital \* Texas A&M HSC College of Medicine  
Texas Osteopathic Medical Association \* Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center  
University of North Texas Health Science Center \* University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston