



Walking in Our Patients' Shoes—Toward Empathy, Well-being, and Better Patient Care

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The University of Tennessee College of Medicine added patient simulations to their residency curriculum to improve patient-physician communication and relationship skills, enabling sustainable holistic care and better health outcomes.

Objectives

- Expose the learner to the influence of the social determinants of health.
- Offer the learner experiential awareness of the challenges faced by patients and additional resources to utilize in their development of a patient's treatment plan.
- Equip learner with additional skills to better communicate and understand their patients (empathy).
- Demonstrate the benefits of a collective "team" approach toward patient care (physician well-being).

Impact

- The simulations are actual patient cases that reveal challenges patients face and how social determinants of health affect compliance to treatment.
- The simulations are designed to be engaged as a team to build community and demonstrate the benefits of a collective joined in common cause: to combat isolation that can lead to burnout.
- The simulations require the learner to look at the expectations of the patient beyond discharge.
- The simulations offer humanistic perspectives that improve patient-physician communication and relationship skills.

Lessons Learned

After completing the simulations and discussions, all participants agreed that the patient simulations demonstrated how their assumptions affect patient care.

94% agreed that the simulations demonstrated how the **patient's living situation** affects their compliance to treatment plans.

88% agreed that the simulations demonstrated the importance of **social, spiritual, and general history** to tailor treatment plans.

94% agreed that the simulations demonstrated the value of a **multidisciplinary team approach** to patient care.

94% agreed that the simulations demonstrated how their **empathy** might affect patient care.

Get involved!

Contact our program by visiting www.acponline.org/physician-well-being, e-mailing us at ACPwellbeing@acpprograms.org, and engaging with us on social media using [#physicianwellbeing](https://twitter.com/physicianwellbeing).

