



Professionalism in Family Medicine Summit Executive Summary and Next Steps

September 2-3 2025; Chicago, IL

Hosted by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM), co-sponsored by the American Medical Association, and supported by a grant from the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) Foundation

Introduction

The 2025 Professionalism in Family Medicine Summit brought together leaders from family medicine residency and academic departments, certifying and accrediting bodies, and professional societies to reexamine the meaning, teaching, and assessment of professionalism in an era of rapid cultural and systemic change. Over two days, participants identified opportunities for innovation and collaboration, and brainstormed strategies for embedding professionalism in both training and practice.

Summit goals were to:

- Discuss future directions for family medicine professionalism expectations
- Develop strategies for faculty and physician education/development
- Get input on future curriculum
- Identify opportunities for collaboration
- Define next steps

What is the Problem We're Trying to Solve?

The Summit started with a prioritization exercise to gauge perceptions of the problem the specialty is trying to solve by investing time and resources into reimagining professionalism.

Highest-rated response:

- Identifying a definition of professionalism in the modern era that allows us, as a body, to develop curricula, faculty development, and assessment tools ideally suited to promote holistic, patient-centered care grounded in excellence

Other highly-rated responses:

- Moving away from professionalism as a “duty” or punitive word and towards a shared identity where family physicians at all stages take pride in their work and its responsible and ethical practice
- Making space for individualism while forming a coherent collective identity as a profession
- To reimagine family medicine professionalism as a means to address the crisis of trust and engagement between patients, doctors, and the health care environment

Reclaiming the Word “Professionalism”

Participants acknowledged that professionalism has, at times, been “weaponized” in training and practice, however ABFM research indicates that diplomates support keeping the word “professionalism.”

Recommendation: Reclaim the word professionalism, while communicating clear distinctions between misconduct, job expectations, and professionalism.

Key themes and discussions:

- Definition: Participants encouraged the task force to not get caught up in creating a definition. The focus, instead, should be on behaviors.
- Shared Identity vs. Punitive Framework: Participants emphasized shifting professionalism away from a punitive or compliance-based concept toward one rooted in pride, identity, and shared responsibility.
- Generational and Cultural Shifts: Younger physicians’ expectations (e.g., work-life balance, equity, advocacy) and the rise of AI are shaping new professionalism norms.

Supporting comments from Summit attendees:

- Professionalism is about professional identity and purpose.
- This is about connecting what we say we are with what we do.
- Focus on identity formation rather than misconduct.

Proposed steps to reclaiming the word:

- Develop a Family Physician Oath grounded in values unique to the specialty.
- Formalize white-coat or graduation ceremonies tied to family medicine identity.
- Make attestation to core values part of certification and recertification.

Curriculum for Family Medicine Residency Programs

Participants discussed development of a future curriculum and what should be taught.

Below are specific recommendations for residency education. Participants also created a detailed list of behaviors associated with professionalism.

Recommendation	Rationale / Benefits
Outline and communicate the difference between misconduct, job expectations, and professionalism; focus education on professionalism.	Eliminates confusion and moves the specialty toward reclaiming the word professionalism
Teach the “why” behind professionalism. Take into account the history and values of the discipline.	Adult learners are driven by relevance, experience, and intrinsic motivation.
Develop a core professionalism curriculum with longitudinal threads.	Ensures consistency; allows repeated reinforcement; avoids “one-and-done” lectures.
Emphasize identity, role modeling, and reflection.	Identity formation is central. Reflection helps internalization. Faculty role models are powerful.

Integrate advocacy, social accountability, and community engagement.	Professionalism increasingly includes advocacy for patients, systems, and communities. Integration of these activities builds relevance and aligns with learner values.
Incorporate well-being, equity, and inclusion as core components.	Without supporting physician well-being, professionalism efforts may feel hollow. Equity reduces harm and builds inclusive culture.
Offer early orientation to professional standards and ethical expectations.	Sets the tone and shared expectations, reduces confusion, and improves consistency
Align curriculum with core outcomes, competencies, and milestones.	Ensures that professionalism curriculum is coherent with accreditation expectations and certifying bodies
Use learner individual learning plans and remediation pathways.	Recognizes that each resident has unique strengths and growth areas; supports continuous improvement

Faculty Development

Attendees recognized that faculty development is critical to meaningful change. Faculty need to be taught how to model professionalism, as well as the concepts and principles that will be embedded in future curriculum. It's important to begin with an explanation of why this effort to reimagine professionalism is important and why family medicine is elevating this topic now.

Assessment and Accountability

Participants noted that professionalism is sometimes context-dependent and culturally nuanced. However, standardizing competency-based assessments, using entrustment scales, can promote learner development and reduce bias.

Promising approaches:

- Use multiple assessment methods with regular feedback.
- Consider embedding professionalism assessment into the New Innovations and MedHub direct observation mobile app assessments developed by the STFM CBME Task Force.
- Use direct observation, portfolios, 360 evaluations, and structured reflection.
- Begin using coaching and individualized learning plans rather than remediation plans alone.
- Explore using AI-assisted tools for recognizing positive behaviors (used cautiously, not as decision-makers).

Recommendations for Health Care Executives/Systems

- Invest in and reinforce professional values at the institutional level, recognizing culture as a key determinant of professional behavior.
- Ensure organizational policies, evaluations, and leadership promotion criteria reflect and reward professionalism values.

- Support faculty development and faculty recognition. Ensure faculty are evaluated on professionalism, not only clinical or academic metrics.
- Invest in interprofessional involvement; professionalism involves all members of the care team. Include non-physician staff in training and feedback mechanisms.

Next Steps for the STFM Professionalism in Family Medicine Education Task Force

Get input from residents and students on professionalism in family medicine education

The task force will continue to conduct focus groups with residents and students to get their input on:

- The current state of professionalism in family medicine education
- Challenges with maintaining professionalism in family medicine education
- What should be included in professionalism curriculum
- Their perception of faculty development needs

Develop and release professionalism curriculum for residents and third- and fourth-year medical students

The scenario-based curriculum will cover:

- The founding principles of family medicine
- How to identify and mitigate inherent business/medical professionalism conflicts
- How to maintain integrity in settings that are more systems-focused than patient-focused
- When and how to advocate for change

Identify or create competency-based assessment tools

The task force will identify or create strategies to assess learners and faculty.

Deliver faculty development

Faculty development will be done through:

- Conference presentations
- Virtual training sessions (webinars)
- Faculty Development Delivered workshops at individual residency programs

Faculty development topics will include:

- Creating learning environments conducive to the ongoing development of “explicit and appropriate professional behaviors” in students, residents, faculty, and staff
- How to foster professionalism based on intrinsic motivation, rather than on a list of rules
- Assessing professionalism, and strategies for addressing professionalism lapses

Collaboration Opportunities

Several organizations were represented at the Summit (see attendee list). Opportunities for future collaboration could include:

- Working on a culture shift by agreeing to common expectations and a shared language
- Leading and participating in faculty development
- Creating and disseminating shared messaging on why professionalism matters
- Disseminating resources developed by the task force
- Creating professionalism tracks at national meetings
- Advocating for more robust ACGME professionalism Milestones

Conclusion

The 2025 Professionalism in Family Medicine Summit underscored that professionalism is not static—it must evolve to meet the realities of modern practice, workforce needs, and societal expectations. By reframing professionalism as an identity to be cultivated rather than a set of punitive rules, and by embedding it at both individual and organizational levels, family medicine can restore trust, strengthen its workforce, and align with the values of future generations. The STFM Professionalism in Family Medicine Education Task Force is positioned to translate Summit discussions into actionable curricula, assessment tools, and institutional supports.

Summit Attendees

Summit Chair

Joseph Gravel, MD

STFM Immediate Past President

Chair of Family and Community Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI

ACGME

Nikhil Goyal, MBBS

ACGME Senior Vice President, Accreditation, Chicago, IL

Lou Edje, MD, MHPE, FAAFP

Inaugural David M. Wu M.D. and Bernadine E. Wu MD Endowed Professor

Senior Associate Dean, Medical Education

Professor: Family Medicine, Learning Health Sciences, University of Michigan Medical School

American Academy of Family Physicians

Steven Furr, MD, FAAFP

AAFP Board Chair

Family Physician, Family Medical Clinic of Jackson, Jackson, AL

Margot Savoy, MD, MPH, FAAFP

AAFP Senior Vice President, Education, Inclusiveness, and Physician Well-Being

American Academy of Family Physicians, Leawood KS

American Board of Family Medicine

Andrea Anderson, MD, MEd, FAAFP

ABFM Immediate Past Chair

Associate Chief of the Division of Family Medicine, GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Washington, DC

Warren Newton, MD, MPH

ABFM President and CEO, Lexington, KY

Jay Fetter, MSHA

ABFM Director, Residency Engagement & Pgm Manager, Residency Redesign, Lexington, KY

American Board of Internal Medicine

Erica N. Johnson, MD, FACP, FIDSA

ABIM Senior Vice President for Academic and Medical Affairs, Philadelphia, PA

American Board of Medical Specialties

Greg Ogrinc, MD, MS

ABMS Senior Vice President, Certification Standards and Programs, Chicago, IL

American Board of Pediatrics

Michael Barone, MD, MPH

ABP President and CEO, Chapel Hill, NC

Suzanne Woods, MD

ABP Executive Vice President, Credentialing and Initial Certification, Chapel Hill, NC

American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians

Andrew Slattengren, DO, FAAFP

Director of Osteopathic Education

University of Minnesota North Memorial Family Medicine Residency. Minneapolis, MN

American Medical Association

Frederick Chen, MD, MPH

AMA Chief Health and Science Officer

American Medical Association, Chicago, IL

Audiey Kao, MD, PhD

AMA Vice President, Ethics

American Medical Association, Chicago, IL

Karen Reinbold, MBA

AMA Director, Health, Science & Ethics

American Medical Association, Chicago, IL

Marie Deleon

AMA Executive Assistant

American Medical Association, Chicago, IL

Association of Departments of Family Medicine

Colleen Fogarty, MD, MsC, FAAFP

ADFM President-Elect

William Rocktaschel Professor and Chair
Department of Family Medicine, University of Rochester

Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors

R Aaron Lambert, MD, FAAFP
AFMRD Board Member
Program Director, Cabarrus Family Medicine Residency, Concord, NC

NAPCRG

K Taylor Bosworth, MD/PhD Student
Medical Student, University of Missouri – Columbia

Society of Teachers of Family Medicine Staff

Mary Theobald, MBA (project lead)
STFM Chief of Strategy and Innovation, Leawood, KS

April Davies, MPH
STFM Director of Strategic Priorities and Programs, Leawood, KS

Society of Teachers of Family Medicine Professionalism in Medical Education Task Force

Adam Saperstein, MD, FAAFP, CAPT, MC, USN
Associate Professor and Vice Chair for Medical Education, Department of Family Medicine
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

John Brady, MD
Associate Professor, VCU-Riverside Family Medicine Residency, Richmond, VA

Timothy Hoff, PhD
Professor of Management, Healthcare Systems, and Health Policy
D'Amore-McKim School of Business, School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs
Northeastern University, Boston, MA

Amy Clithero, PhD, MBA, AFAMEE
Family & Community Medicine
Block Chair, Medicine in NM
Director for Medical Student Education on Health Policy & Advocacy
University of New Mexico School of Medicine

Roger Garvin MD
Director of GME Integration and Expansion, Oregon Health & Science University

Daniel Casey, MD
Program Director, JPS Family Medicine Residency, John Peter Smith Hospital. Fort Worth, TX

Lynne Havsy, PhD
Licensed Psychologist/ Certified School Psychologist
Assistant Director of Behavioral Science and Resident Development
Family Medicine - Anderson Residency Program
St. Luke's University Health Network, Philadelphia, PA

Maria Montanez Villacampa, MD, FAAFP
Associate Professor/Clinical
Residency Associate Program Director, Department of Family and Community Medicine
University of Texas Health Science Center-San Antonio

Natalie Long, MD
Associate Professor of Clinical Family and Community Medicine
Family Medicine Clerkship Director
Faculty Director, MedZou Community Health Clinic, University of Missouri-Columbia

Takudzwa Shumba, MD MPH
Clinical Associate Professor, Stanford Family Medicine
Division of Primary Care and Population Health
Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto, CA

Lauren E. Gibson-Oliver, MD, MBA, FAAFP
Residency Program Director - Little Rock
Assistant Professor, Department of Family & Preventive Medicine
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Others With Expertise and Interest

Christopher Haymaker, PhD, HSPP
Associate Professor/Clinical Psychologist/Behavioral Medicine Clinician Educator/
Director GME Well-Being
Western Michigan Homer Stryker MD School of Medicine

Jeff Haney, MD
Vice Dean for Clinical Affairs
Chair, Department of Medical Education and Clinical Sciences
Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine Washington State University, Spokane, WA

Jennifer Cavin, MD
Associate Clerkship Director, Longitudinal Primary Care Clerkship
Assistant Professor, Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin
Core Faculty, UT Dell Family Medicine Residency

Khuram R Ghumman, MD, MPH, CPE, FAAFP

Director, Primary Care Clerkship & Family Medicine Sub Internship
Clinical Professor of Family Medicine, Frank H Netter MD School of Medicine
Quinnipiac University

Juliet Bliss, DO
Co-APD and Director of Osteopathic Education - Family Medicine with OB, Osteopathic
Manipulation
Northwest Washington Family Medicine Residency, Virginia Mason Franciscan Health

David (Davey) J. Johnson, PhD, LMFT
Director of Behavioral Health Resident Education
Department of Family and Community Medicine, Wake Forest University School of Medicine

Daniela Maristany, MD
Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Medicine, UCSF School of Medicine

Ebony Whisenant, MD
STFM DEIA Committee Chair
Associate Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine
Medical College of Georgia Augusta University

Residents

Sushania Pryce, MD
North Side Milwaukee Health Centers Family Medicine Residency, Milwaukee, WI

Delaney Weiland MD
South Side Milwaukee Health Centers Family Medicine Residency, Milwaukee, WI