

FOLLOW ME: MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR FAMILY MEDICINE RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

Bright Zhou, MD, MS¹; Aerial Petty, DO²

¹University of Southern California, Keck School of Medicine, Los Angeles, CA

²American Board of Family Medicine and The George Washington University, Washington, DC

Corresponding Author: Bright Zhou, MD, MS, University of Southern California, Keck School of Medicine, zhou.bright8@gmail.com

Many family medicine residency programs (FMRPs) use a social media platform (SMP) to showcase their programs to potential applicants. Since virtual interviews became common during the COVID-19 pandemic, social media (SoMe) has helped applicants gain insight into aspects of program culture that are often missing from official program materials.^{1,2}

There are few guidelines on effectively managing and developing content for FMRP SMPs.² Many accounts are run by trainees, leading to high turnover and inconsistent content. This is compounded by the lack of high-quality research on SMPs' impact on recruitment and education.³

We offer resident-centered best practices based on managing FMRP social media accounts.

RECRUITMENT

Successful FMRP SMPs use tactics to share the intangible culture of their program. Tactics include virtual open houses where residents present their workspaces, "takeovers" showcasing resident daily life on a rotation, informal socials for engaging applicants, and resident profiles highlighting hobbies and interests (Table 1).

Table 1. Example Use of Instagram to Advance Family Medicine Residency Program Goals



Social media platform aim	Strategy	Example	Delivery method
Recruitment	Share FMRP culture to optimize FMRP-applicant match	- Day-in-life - Resident social - Resident features	- Instagram live video - Instagram story Q&A - Instagram reel
Diversity, advocacy, and justice	Showcase programmatic, resident, and community diversity, advocacy, and justice work to promote FMRP mission and values	- Diversity open house featuring - UIM Residents and faculty - Advocacy day - Op-ed	- Instagram grid post - Featured Instagram story
Curricular innovation	Facilitate collaboration among FMRPs, GME programs, and FM departments	- Resident workshops - Research presentations	- Instagram reel - Threads/X tutorials

Abbreviations: FMRP, Family Medicine Residency Program; UIM, underrepresented in medicine, Graduate medical education; Q&A, question and answer (Q&A)

DIVERSITY, ADVOCACY, AND JUSTICE

FMRP SMPs showcase diversity by highlighting residents and faculty during cultural heritage months or through dedicated diversity recruitment socials. They may highlight program involvement with local community, in protests, or in participating at state and national advocacy events. Programs should consider how residents are engaging with national and global events through their content creation by collectively developing SoMe policies for disseminating emergency resources during health crises.

CURRICULAR INNOVATION

FMRP SMPs may highlight electives, procedural resources, fellowship application guidance, or timely clinical updates that can inspire new curricula at other programs. These platforms can facilitate resident learning collaboratives.

DISCUSSION

FMRP SMPs are valuable tools for recruiting applicants, showcasing diversity, advocacy, and justice efforts, and sharing curricular innovations. We recommend that SMPs center resident voices, as requested by both residents and applicants.

Creating content for SMPs involves additional labor by trainees. Many FMRPs have created a specific leadership role for managing their SMPs, and others have shared this labor with program administrators. As SMP use grows, it is imperative to support the work with protected time and structured SoMe training, particularly to avoid breaches in professionalism and confidentiality.

Future opportunities include developing regional learning collaboratives to share best practices and encouraging state and local family medicine chapters to build networks of FMRP SMPs. These efforts can help applicants, engage alumni and strengthen the family medicine community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors recognize all the residents who manage their family medicine residency program's social media platforms. They also thank the participants at the STFM workshop who offered their own insights on social media. Lastly, they thank their programs for supporting their scholarship within the social media space.

PRESENTATIONS

"Resident Led Social Media Platforms in Family Medicine Residency Programs: Recruitment, Advocacy, Curricular Innovation," presented May 6, 2024 at the STFM Annual Spring Conference in Los Angeles, California.

REFERENCES

- Phung A, Wright K, Choi NJS. An analysis of a family medicine residency program's social media engagement during the 2021-2022 Match Cycle. *PRIMER Peer-Rev Rep Med Educ Res.* 2023;7:8. doi:10.22454/PRIMER.2023.426399
- Oliver MG, Kelly K. Student perceptions and use of social media as residency program information. *Fam Med.* 2022;54(5):380-383. doi:10.22454/FamMed.2022.968351
- Sterling M, Leung P, Wright D, Bishop TF. The use of social media in graduate medical education: a systematic review. *Acad Med.* 2017;92(7):1043-1056. doi:10.1097/ACM.0000000000001617