

Health Professions Education Institute (HPEI)

Furthering medical Spanish education through a fourth year elective focused on community engagement

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

Background/Needs Assessment: With a rapidly growing Spanish-speaking population in the United States, lack of physician-patient language concordance is an important source of health disparities among Latino patients.¹ Therefore, there is an increasing need to incorporate medical Spanish language training in undergraduate medical education.¹ The MAESTRO program at WFSOM is a four-year, longitudinal medical Spanish certificate program that seeks to train students to be culturally and linguistically competent physicians. The first two years of the curriculum mirror the undergraduate core medical curriculum didactics, while the second half of the program emphasizes clinical application of medical Spanish. In the fourth year, students have significant scheduling flexibility and the opportunity to create electives that match their educational interests. Given this, an elective focused on patient care in Spanish was created and piloted for future MAESTRO students.

Objectives: To design, develop, and launch a fourth year medical Spanish clinical elective focused on practical application of medical Spanish skills with emphasis on community engagement.

Methods/Description of Program: In November 2021 through January 2022, a fourth year special clinical elective rotation focused on patient care in Spanish was created and piloted by two fourth year medical students. In academic year 2022-2023, fourth year students in the MAESTRO program are given the opportunity to complete this special elective focused on patient care in Spanish. The components of the rotation include time working in a community clinic, time spent shadowing hospital interpreters, and dedicated time with a Spanish-speaking clinician in the student's specialty of choice. Students are required to create a durable product such as an op-ed or informational patient materials and write a brief reflection on lessons learned during the rotation.

Anticipated Results/Evaluation Plan: Students who participate in the elective will be asked to complete pre and post course surveys looking at knowledge, attitudes, and skills in medical Spanish and care of Spanish-speaking patients. End of rotation reflection papers will also be reviewed as qualitative data. We anticipate that most students will find this experience to be a meaningful educational tool in their medical Spanish training.

Next Steps: Collect and analyze survey and qualitative data from MAESTRO students participating in the elective during academic year 2022-2023.

1. Ortega P, Perez N, Robles B, Turmelle Y, Acosta D. Teaching medical Spanish to improve population health: Evidence for incorporating language education and assessment in U.S. medical schools. *Health Equity*. 2019;3.1: 557-566.