

Title: Professionalism in Tomorrow's Healthcare System

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Abstract

Reformers of medical education understand that tomorrow's physicians will need an expanded set of knowledge, skills, and sensitivities than to allow for the competent and ethical practice of medicine given the complexities introduced by the multiple industries and stakeholders that form the context in which healthcare is provided. These new competencies have profound implications for the role of the professional as well as the values associated with our traditional understanding of "professionalism."

Professionalism, meant to guide physicians when confronted with difficult decisions or choices, can no longer be assumed or taken for granted. If tomorrow's physicians are going to play a lead in shaping their role in practice, in the delivery system, and in the greater society, the issues that require the acquisition of new knowledge, skills, and sensitivities, must be introduced to medical students and medical students must thoughtfully consider them. This application builds on our prior work developing this kind of curriculum.

To date our work has been based on *our* understanding of these issues and what will be required of physicians in the future. Going forward requires the systematic collection of data. It requires a better sense of what medical students *know* about these issues and their *attitudes* towards learning about these issues. We will conduct focus groups with all four classes of University of Virginia medical students to inform us as to *what* educational offerings are needed, *how* these issues should be presented, and *when* it is appropriate to offer them.