

# Incorporating Students into Patient Care/Workflow

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1-PAGERS  
for  
PRECEPTORS

**This 1-Pager for Preceptors serves as a resource for strategies that can be utilized to more effectively integrate students into clinical practice.** Many clinicians express interest in precepting clinical students with the desire to "give back" to the profession, to serve as a role model for future clinicians, and to share their passion for clinical practice. However, there are perceived challenges to incorporating students into a clinical practice or workflow. Two of the most commonly cited challenges are time management and maintaining efficient patient throughput.

## Share the Teaching Responsibilities

- Involve other clinician(s) (MDs, DOs, PAs, NPs) in the practice to work with the student
- Utilize nurses, MAs, techs, etc., to instruct students about procedures they perform (injections, phlebotomy, performing PFTs and EKGs, etc.)

## Plan Ahead with Patients

- Preselect the patients most appropriate for the student to see (more straight-forward cases, open to students, etc.)
- Double-book/wave-schedule patients – have the student see a patient in one room while the preceptor sees one (or sometimes more) patient(s) in another room
- In general, students are not expected to see every patient that the provider does over the course of a day

## Teamwork

- Have the student obtain the history and/or perform the physical exam while the preceptor observes and documents information in the electronic medical record
- Have the student observe encounters with complex patients

## Fully Utilize Student

- Although the primary learning objective for the PA student is focused on the provision of patient care, there are some tasks that the MA might otherwise perform (take vital signs) that the student can do for the patient while the MA prepares another patient for the preceptor
- Have students call patients with test results after discussing them with the preceptor
- Have students provide patient education after confirming the information to be communicated

## Summarize and Clarify

- Don't repeat every aspect of the patient history – summarize and clarify information obtained from the student about the patient
- Don't repeat the entire physical exam performed by the student – the preceptor should perform and document only those elements requiring evaluation and/or clarification

## Set Time Limits

- If you have specific time constraints for a patient room, let the student know – "you have 15 minutes to see this patient"

## Utilize Educational Strategies for Effective Teaching

- See the 1-Pagers for Preceptors: SNAPPS, One-Minute Preceptor, and Ask-Tell-Ask Feedback to maximize your teaching time

### REFERENCES

Seim HC, Johnson OG. Clinical Preceptors: Tips for effective teaching with minimal downtime. *Fam Med* 1999;31(8):538-9.  
Cayley Jr. WE. Effective Clinical Education: Strategies for teaching medical students and residents in the office. *WMJ* 2011;110(4):178-81.

