Enhancing Resident Professionalism: Rewarding Citizenship Changes Behavior

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Background and Setting
Mercy Catholic Medical Center sponsors a 67 person internal medicine residency
Residents are a mix of US allopathic, US osteopathic, American IMG and International IMG
Residents rotate at two community-teaching hospitals 4 miles apart
Didactic lectures (“noon conferences”) held daily
Year divided into 13 4-week “blocks”
1 program administrator and 1 administrative assistant support program director and leadership
Sick coverage (“jeopardy call”) assigned to residents on electives in blocks of 4 day
Most residents can expect to be called for “jeopardy” once for every 12 days they are assigned

Needs:
Hospital pressures for earlier discharge and residency work hour restrictions challenged residents time management during the day
Residents began to have lapses in non-clinical related professionalism
Attendance at noon conference was falling
Delinquent medical records were rising
Ensuring adherence to routine administrative tasks (e.g. PPD placement, duty hours entry, on-line training) required increased time and effort from administrative staff

Objective: Motivate behavior change by allocating less jeopardy call to residents with higher non-clinical professionalism

Description
Each resident assigned a “citizenship score”
“Score” based on conference attendance and administrative adherence generated at mid-point of each block
Scores compiled by program administrator and PGY4 chief residents
Each month each resident receives an email with His/her score
Anonymous scores of other residents in same PGY year
Scores used to prioritize jeopardy assignments—resident with lowest score on an appropriate rotation would be assigned jeopardy first, etc.

Evaluation
Citizenship scores increased over 1st half of academic year (p < .001 for PGY1 and 2, p = .002 for PGY3 comparing block 2 and block 6 scores
After 6 months
100% of residents entered some duty hours without reminders
No residents had > 5 discharge summaries pending or any records > 28 days old,
4% of residents had any evaluations incomplete after > 90 days

Summary:
Resident citizenship score positively impacted all non-clinical professionalism attributes measured

Discussion/Impact:
Strengths:
Consistent impact seen across professionalism attributes
Diverse residents
Quickly effective
Limitations:
Required additional staff time (although offset by less time in reminders)
Single program
Occasional “unfair” penalty because of computer glitches

Implications:
Ensuring adhere with non-clinical professional requirements was traditionally considered a “minor” or “nuisance” task.
Traditional adherence relegated to reminders by GME staff and leadership.
We reframed completion of these tasks as professionalism
By linking less professional behavior to a minor penalty—additional jeopardy call—we increased compliance.