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**Clinical Informatics Training During Emergency Medicine Residency:
The University of Michigan Experience**

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Clinical Informatics Training During EM Residency

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35

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37

38 Contributions: RWT conceived of the curriculum and started the program; was responsible for
39 design of manuscript. MA and SMB are early resident members who contributed to many listed
40 projects and substantially to the manuscript. SB was the lead analyst who facilitated most of the
41 projects and supervised the builders; she was deeply involved in shaping the program's structure.
42 LRH was the residency program director who facilitated curricular development and approval;
43 she contributed significantly to the manuscript. BSB was the operations lead during most of the
44 projects and helped shape the program; he contributed to the design of the manuscript. RM acted
45 as the EM informatics supervisor and was the primary faculty member responsible for the
46 success of the program; he supervised the design and execution of the manuscript.

47 **Abstract**

48 Clinical informatics is a rich field with longstanding ties to resident education in many clinical
49 specialties, though a historic gap persists in emergency medicine. To address this gap, we
50 developed a clinical informatics track to facilitate advanced training for senior residents at our

51 four-year emergency medicine residency. We piloted an affordable project-based approach with
52 strong ties to operational leadership at our institution and describe specific projects and their
53 outcomes. Given the relatively low cost, departmental benefit, and unique educational value, we
54 believe our model is generalizable to many emergency medicine residencies. We present a
55 pathway to defining a formal curriculum using Kern's framework.

58 **Need for Innovation**

59 Physicians use electronic health records (EHRs) nearly twice as often as they interact face-to-
60 face with patients in both the emergency department¹ and other clinical environments.²⁻⁴ EHRs
61 enhance care overall⁵, but EHR usability has been implicated in patient safety events⁶⁻⁸,
62 physician burnout⁹⁻¹¹, and increased task-switching in the Emergency Department (ED).¹²
63 Despite this complexity, EHRs will remain an essential component of the healthcare
64 environment in the future. Therefore, just as we train our residents to be experts in airway
65 management and central venous catheterization to minimize adverse events^{13,14}, we need to train
66 them longitudinally in the use and optimization of EHRs and other clinical informatics (CI)
67 systems.

69 In this paper, we conduct a historical review of residency CI education in the United States
70 followed by a description of our experience developing an informatics track within our four-year
71 training program for senior residents interested in developing advanced informatics skills.
72 Finally, we present a possible pathway other programs could use to define a formal curriculum
73 using Kern's framework.¹⁵

75 **Background: Resident Informatics Education in the United States**

76 "Clinical informatics is not simply 'computers in medicine' but rather is a body of knowledge,
77 methods, and theories that focus on the effective use of information and knowledge to improve
78 the quality, safety, and cost-effectiveness of patient care as well as the health of both individuals
79 and populations."¹⁶

80

81 Most informatics training in the United States is directed towards fellowship level learners.
82 Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-sponsored fellowships in CI
83 have been in place since 2014 with a goal of training board-certified informaticists from varied
84 clinical specialties. As of 2020, there are 43 ACGME-accredited CI fellowships listed by the
85 American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA).¹⁷ AMIA has also sponsored both generic
86 and emergency medicine-specific survey courses of clinical informatics ('AMIA 10 x 10'), but
87 these courses have been designed for physicians who were already in practice, rather than
88 residents.¹⁸

89
90 Residency informatics curricula emerged during the 1990s when general computing was more
91 foreign to the average user, with examples in internal medicine¹⁹, pathology²⁰⁻²⁴, pediatrics²⁵,
92 psychiatry²⁶, and radiology^{27,28}. Early curricula, especially in pathology, focused on basic
93 laboratory codes, hardware, decision support, and data management.

94
95 UCLA provides the most in-depth modern example of general CI training during residency
96 training, where trainees from multiple disciplines underwent a longitudinal program throughout
97 their residency.²⁹ The program successfully developed interest, satisfied graduates, and
98 facilitated project completion producing improvements to their healthcare system at a pragmatic
99 cost. However, only a small subset (4.3%) of their trainees represented emergency medicine, and
100 the efforts were not driven by the ED's needs. Similarly, there are few requirements within EM
101 residency curricula for expertise in informatics-related domains.³⁰ To date, the authors are
102 unaware of any published experiences of emergency medicine residency-based CI training.
103 Therefore, in this paper, we present our experience piloting a CI track within our residency.

104 105 **EM Resident Involvement in Clinical Informatics: Motivation and Justification**

106 Many areas of focus within clinical informatics are relevant to emergency medicine, including
107 clinical decision support³¹, usability testing³², clinical summarization³³, computerized physician
108 order entry³⁴, and predictive analytics.^{35,36} Innovation in any of these areas requires clinicians
109 who deeply understand clinical workflows and who can inspire change at a grassroots level. As
110 the proverbial "boots-on-the-ground," resident physicians are keenly aware of clinical workflow
111 inefficiencies and workarounds as well as the strengths and limitations of their health systems'

112 EHRs. We believe this perspective positions residents to serve as effective translators between
113 clinical and informatics domains. Furthermore, residents have both educational requirements for
114 involvement in quality improvement (QI) projects^{37,38} and demonstrated abilities to effect change
115 through such projects.³⁹ As examples, resident-led QI projects have created sustained decreases
116 in ED boarding times⁴⁰, resulted in safer inpatient handoff practices⁴¹, and improved
117 pneumococcal vaccination rates in older admitted adults.⁴² Given these factors, we theorized that
118 resident participation in an EM informatics curriculum would provide unique educational and
119 service-based opportunities.

120

121 **The Resident Physician Build Team: Objectives and Development Process**

122 Our team developed in a grassroots manner after the first author (senior EM resident) sought out
123 the last author (associate chief medical informatics officer; board-certified in EM and CI)
124 seeking opportunities in EM informatics. After examining possible tracks, we observed two
125 likely populations seeking advanced informatics training during residency: those seeking
126 advanced training as part of a career in operations or research, and those seeking a formal
127 informatics fellowship and CI board certification.

128

129 We examined several options including formal curricula using classic textbooks¹⁶, standardized
130 national CI courses¹⁸, and vendor-based EHR optimization training.^{43,44} We balanced the
131 schedule and cost-related impacts of these options with the baseline requirements of an already
132 busy EM residency schedule. Ultimately, vendor-specific Epic Physician Builder training
133 through our EHR vendor (Epic Systems Corporation, Verona, WI) provided residents with
134 concrete skill development that could be deployed rapidly, at minimal cost, and with minimal
135 impact on clinical scheduling, which were important factors during residency training. For these
136 reasons, we focused our program on the development and use of these hands-on EHR
137 optimization skills.

138

139 Epic training programs are free, however, travel costs and protected time for skill development
140 required consideration. Costs were addressed through application for local residency
141 development grants and, given our geographic location in Southeast Michigan, amounted to
142 roughly \$2000 total, which provided travel and lodging for two separate four-day visits to the

143 training site in Wisconsin. Protected time was facilitated using shift clustering in consultation
144 with program leadership in advance of training. Since 2017, we have had 6 residents complete
145 physician builder training within our residency using this process.

146
147 After training, residents became familiar with the governance, design, and optimization of ED
148 information systems by joining regular meetings with ED operations and informatics leadership.
149 Residents were supervised by our lead EM EHR analyst (author Brooks), who was a key partner
150 in developing guidelines for project design, project management, and supervision of build
151 activities. Partnering with a health information technology expert allowed residents to contribute
152 productively to operational needs in a safe and supervised manner. Resident projects were
153 selected based on informal assessment of need within the emergency department based on
154 conversations with faculty, residents, ED leadership, and physician assistants. Residents were
155 encouraged to evaluate their projects and present their results at national meetings. Program
156 leadership facilitated this goal through scheduling and financial support.

157
158 **Outcomes**

159 Outcomes of the curriculum include involvement in projects, the outcomes of the projects
160 themselves, and the career preparation resulting from participation in the track.

161 To date, CI track residents have completed projects in several domains including order set
162 generation and analysis, documentation workflows, clinical decision support, and user interface
163 improvements. All projects underwent review by ED operational and EHR analyst teams prior to
164 build, testing, or deployment, and some underwent more in-depth evaluation (discussed below).
165 Table 1 lists specific projects.

166
167 Table 1 – Resident informatics contributions during the first three years of the Michigan Clinical
168 Informatics Track

Activity	Specific Projects
Order set generation and analysis	- Order sets to facilitate paracentesis (with formal user experience evaluation), arthrocentesis, thoracentesis

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- Order sets to help manage rare and high-risk situations including acute liver failure, overdoses requiring lipid emulsion therapy or high dose insulin, leukostasis, subarachnoid hemorrhage, aortic dissection, ventricular assist device management, and novel coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

Documentation workflows

- Ultrasound-guided nerve block documentation workflow with documentation templates
- Pulmonary ultrasound workflow with documentation templates
- Updated and streamlined ultrasound procedure documentation (thoracentesis, arthrocentesis, paracentesis, central venous catheter, arterial catheter, incision and drainage, lumbar puncture)

Clinical Decision Support

- Designed, built, and generated training materials for clinical decision support system facilitating the use of the Canadian Head CT rule in minor head trauma based on local insurance-based incentive measures with a timeline to pursue similar approaches for improving adherence to pulmonary embolism diagnostic pathways and pediatric chest x-ray pathways

User Interface Improvements

- Improved user interface and workflows for emergent lab, imaging, and consult ordering
- Participated in ED trackboard color scheme design using user-centered principles

169

170 Detailed Project Examples

171 We present in more detail two interventions and their outcomes: an order set facilitating
172 paracentesis and a clinical decision support tool used to improve adherence to head CT ordering
173 guidelines.

174

175 The paracentesis order set project provided both operational value for our ED as well as
176 educational and academic productivity for the involved resident. Informal discussion with
177 residents revealed the need for a paracentesis order set, which did not previously exist. Prior
178 workflow was time consuming and inefficient, requiring users to access multiple EHR screens
179 for point-of-care ultrasound, laboratory, and local anesthetic orders. Clinical guidelines were
180 evaluated, paper prototypes were generated, and institutional review board review approval was
181 obtained. The order set was then built in the EHR (see Figure 1). Using Morae (Techsmith
182 Corporation, Okemos, MI), we observed and timed 17 EM clinicians performing scripted tasks
183 facilitating the performance of paracentesis and ascites analysis in a simulated EHR
184 environment. The same tasks were performed first without and then with the order set.

185

186 We observed clinicians from the following levels of training: attending (3), PGY-1 (3), PGY 2-3
187 (4), PGY 4 (3), physician assistant (3), off-service internal medicine resident (1)). Order
188 consistency with clinical guidelines, efficiency of task completion, and provider ease-of-entry
189 were extracted and analyzed in aggregate by level of training. Providers' orders were reported as
190 inconsistent with clinical guidelines if the provider required guideline consultation during order
191 entry or the provider acknowledged they had forgotten a test after seeing the order set.

192 Consistency with guidelines ranged from 0% in interns to 100% in faculty. Overall, clinicians
193 were consistent with guidelines 29% of the time. On average, providers took 3.57 minutes

194 without the order set and 0.85 minutes with the order set. Efficiency gains were greatest in
195 interns and off-service residents. Ease-of-entry scores, reported as a Likert scale from 1 (very
196 easy) to 5 (very hard), improved by a mean of 1.71 points with addition of the order set. The
197 results of this analysis led to both ongoing support for the program internally as well as a poster
198 presentation at the Council of Residency Directors in Emergency Medicine 2019 Academic
199 Assembly.⁴⁵

200
201 The head CT project provided a unique experience for residents to engage in clinical decision
202 support development. The Michigan Emergency Department Improvement Collaborative
203 (MEDIC)⁴⁶, a Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network-supported
204 collaborative quality initiative throughout the State of Michigan, sought to improve physician
205 adherence to head CT ordering guidelines for adults with minor head trauma as defined by the
206 Canadian Head CT Rule.⁴⁷ A statewide dashboard provided metrics for hospitals and individual
207 clinicians, and value-based reimbursement (VBR) incentives from insurers encouraged
208 improvement. Trained abstractors determined ultimate adherence with the decision rule. In
209 consultation with the department operations leadership and MEDIC Clinical Champions,
210 residents in the informatics track designed, built, and tested an interruptive clinical decision
211 support tool to facilitate completion of the Canadian Head CT rule at the time of CT ordering in
212 the EHR. Additionally, they produced educational materials for clinicians to understand its use.
213 Deployment of the tool resulted in an initial improvement of adherence from 38.1% to 69%, and
214 a year-over-year improvement from 49.5% (2018) to 57.9% (2019). More rigorous study will be
215 needed to evaluate the significance and longevity of this effect. This project not only allowed
216 resident participants to directly impact clinical care, but also provided an opportunity to develop
217 relationships with operational leaders as well as led to direct improvement in department VBR
218 through the MEDIC and Blue Cross Blue Shield collaborative. This endeavor clearly
219 demonstrated the wide-ranging impacts that can be obtained through resident contributions to
220 EM informatics.

221

222 Career Preparation

223 At present, two participants have graduated from the program: one was accepted to an ACGME-
 224 accredited clinical informatics fellowship and the other accepted a community position with
 225 financial support for EHR optimization and physician builder work.

226

227 **Reflective Discussion: Lessons Learned and Future Directions**

228 Overall, we consider our resident informatics track to be a success based on our residents’
 229 contributions to our department as well as the skills, experience, and career opportunities derived
 230 from participation in the program. We acknowledge, however, that the absence of a formal,
 231 longitudinal curriculum and structured evaluation plan represents a limitation in the scalability of
 232 our program in its current state. Given this lesson, we recommend that residencies developing
 233 similar programs consider using a framework like Kern’s approach to curriculum development.¹⁵
 234 The most notable feature from this framework missing from our own experience with curriculum
 235 generation is the prominence of a formal needs assessment, which we would strongly
 236 recommend before starting a new program. We provide an example using this framework in
 237 Table 2.

238 Table 2 - Potential curricular framework using Kern's six-step approach to curricular
 239 development

Stage	Key Steps
1. Problem Identification and General Needs Assessment	<p data-bbox="824 1184 1377 1709"> Given the substantial role EHRs play in clinical care, physician involvement in optimization is critical. Residents receive little training in informatics and are rarely involved in EHR optimization but are uniquely suited to help solve this problem given their understanding of clinical workflows, EHR strengths and limitations, and potential as change-makers through QI initiatives </p> <p data-bbox="824 1787 1409 1875"> Current Approach: EM residents occasionally seek out advanced training in clinical </p>

<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; opacity: 0.3; transform: rotate(-90deg);">Author Manuscript</p>	<p>informatics without any formal structure or track.</p> <p>Ideal Approach: A structured program would provide education in clinical informatics including hands-on skill development, basic fluency in informatics standards, governance, and project management. A project-centered curriculum would allow resident contributions to operational initiatives and provide opportunities to design, implement, and evaluate CI tools.</p>
<p>2. Targeted Needs Assessment</p>	<p>Learners: Senior EM residents interested in clinical informatics</p> <p>Learning Environment: Clinical informatics track</p> <p>Specific Needs: Depending on career goals, could mirror AMIA core content for fellowship⁴⁸⁻⁵⁰ or focus on operational-specific skills. Real world certification, such as Epic Physician Builder certification, is necessary to allow hands-on work.</p>
<p>3. Goals and Objectives</p>	<p>Broad Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide early exposure to clinical informatics and, if in line with long-term goals, prepare residents for CI fellowship or CI-related career specialization. Provide industry

	<p>standard theoretical and hands-on CI training.</p>
<p>4. Educational Strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Early recruitment to allow time for fundraising, scheduling, and training b. Bi-weekly meeting to discuss projects and techniques c. Bi-weekly reading with small group discussion among track members based on AMIA fellowship core competencies d. Expectation of scholarly project resulting in national presentation or publication e. Expectation of local QI project resulting in live build with subsequent evaluation (usability, performance, or both)
<p>5. Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin structured approach with senior residents during last quarter of prior year - Expand available enrollment based on program interest
<p>6. Evaluation and Feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Quarterly progress reports completed by each resident and reviewed with program supervisor to ensure goals are met and projects are underway b. Annual survey of participating residents to evaluate attitudes surrounding the success of the program

	c. Measure number of participating residents who complete a QI project, successfully present CI-based work at a national conference or through a journal, accomplish hiring goals at conclusion of residency
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We believe our experience implementing an EM-based clinical informatics track suggests benefits both to resident education and to departmental service by involving EM residents in the optimization of the EHR and in the design and implementation of new features. It also outlines a pathway for the development of advanced expertise among a group of motivated senior residents. A project-based core is essential to any advanced pathway and will require local customization based on learner and departmental needs. Existing clinical informatics courses could guide detailed curriculum development for advanced learners. Several example courses include:

- American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) 10x10 courses (including an EM specific option)¹⁸
- Clinical Informatics Fellowship curriculum requirements⁴⁸⁻⁵⁰
- Advanced courses offered by EHR companies

Additionally, there are several organizations within EM where EM residents can get involved at a national level:

- Emergency Medicine Residents Association (EMRA) Informatics Committee
- Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM) Academic Informatics Interest Group
- American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) Informatics Section

Conclusion

Our experience building an informatics track for senior EM residents demonstrates the educational and service-based benefits of providing advanced informatics training to EM residents. Our program was affordable with close connections to clinical care and operational

265 needs, but flexible enough to prepare learners destined for both academic and community-based
266 careers. We believe these features make our approach generalizable to many programs. Future
267 work includes formal curriculum development using an established framework. Furthermore,
268 there may be opportunities for more generalized informatics training for all emergency medicine
269 residents, instead of just self-selected senior residents.

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Order Sets

Clear All Orders

ED Paracentesis  Personalize 

OrderSet to facilitate performing diagnostic paracentesis in AES with a goal of facilitating ultrasound, analgesia, and labs.

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Equipment, Medications, and Labs

Equipment and Medications

- Ultrasound machine to bedside
- ED US Guided Paracentesis
- ED Procedure Meds for Bedside

Routine Labs

- Sterile Body Fluid Culture, Aerobic Ascites (ASCITES)
Once, First occurrence today at 1522
- Anaerobic Culture Ascitis (ASCITES); Paracentesis
STAT, First occurrence today at 1522
- Cell Count and Differential, Body Fluid, Ascites
Once, First occurrence today at 1522
- Protein, Body Fluid, Ascities (ASCFL)
Once, First occurrence today at 1522
- Albumin, Body Fluid, Ascities (ASCFL)
Once, First occurrence today at 1522

Additional Labs

Additional SmartSet Orders

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