



### **FMIG Program of Excellence (PoE) Application**

***Please fill in the following:***

1. Number of students in your medical school: Approximately 415
2. Number of active FMIG members: 28
3. Check all that apply to you:
  - Our school does not have a department of family medicine.
  - Our FMIG has minimal support from our state chapter.
  - Our school has minimal faculty support (i.e. from Dean, Dept. Chair, etc.)
4. Our FMIG has won this award in the past:
  - YES      What years?
  - NO
5. We intend to apply for [Select one]:
  - Overall award
  - Award for Excellence / Innovation in: Community Service

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### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE AWARD APPLICATION:**

- You must use this template for your application. Please complete all sections (unless #8 does not apply to you).***
- The length of this document should be between five and 15 pages. Any longer or shorter and your application will not be considered.***
- In answering questions #3-6, describe what your FMIG learned from the previous year(s), what enhancements/changes you made or what innovations were developed.***

1. Contact Information:  
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2. FMIG Operation: Provide a brief overview of how your FMIG operates, including your leadership structure, mission statement and goal(s), student involvement and retention, and the role of your faculty advisor.

The Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG) at Meharry Medical College currently has an executive board comprised of eight positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Historian, Community Service Chairperson, and Freshman Liaison. We do not currently have a mission statement, but the unofficial mission is to advocate the field of Family Medicine, encourage involvement in FMIG through meeting attendance and community service participation, introduce students to specializations within the field of Family Medicine, and increase the number of student members to AAFP. We hold monthly general body meetings at which different family physicians are invited to provide insight on various aspects of family medicine. We have two official faculty advisors and they try to make themselves available when requested, but they do not attend either executive board meetings or general body meetings (unless they are the scheduled speaker). Our elections are held in May. Students may become involved with FMIG by serving on the executive board, volunteering for community service projects, attending general body information meetings and panel discussions held by FMIG.

3. Community Service: What does your FMIG do for the community? [If you have several community outreach activities, list all of them.] Also, if your FMIG collaborates with your school's SNMA chapter, describe your activities here.

This year Meharry's FMIG has made a commitment to participating in at least one community service project per month. In years past, community service by our FMIG has been minimal, with no activities at all last year. We formed a community service committee who assisted the Community Service Chairperson in planning, organizing and executing community service events. We also collaborated with Meharry's SNMA, SNDA and Pediatrics Interest Group on a health fair for a local elementary school. This collaboration is explained further under March's community service event.

September: Tennessee State University hosted an African Street Festival. Meharry's FMIG had a booth that was designated for performing blood pressure screenings on members of the community. Those that had high blood pressure were advised to follow up with their physician, counseled about compliance with their medication and encouraged to change their lifestyle by cutting back (or eliminating) salt from their diet and to exercise. Participants seemed very appreciative of the advice and Meharry Medical College's commitment to their community. We also provided first aid to any children who were hurt during the fair. A community member had a seizure during the fair and FMIG member were able to assist in keeping the gentleman safe and family members calm until the paramedics arrived.

October: We completed a cell phone drive in which 35 used phones were collected and donated to two organizations, Phones for Life and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). These organizations provide phones to elderly citizens and victims of domestic violence and abuse, respectively, for emergency use.

November: Meharry Medical College hosts "Community Day" annually. The day consists of blood pressure screenings, blood glucose level readings, sickle cell trait testing, face painting and games for children, oral health screenings, and a variety of healthcare information including but not limited to: mental health, hypertension, healthy lifestyle advice, and diabetes management information. Meharry's FMIG provided information on where residents of the community are able to find healthcare, particularly if they are uninsured. Brochures from local clinics as well as Meharry's Family Medicine clinic were given out. We also had a drawing in which two lucky families received \$10 gift cards to one of the local family medicine clinics (Medicos). During November we also volunteered at a local church to help feed the homeless as part of their "Hungry at Hearts" program. We prepared plates of food for the patrons, spoke with the families in attendance and cleaned the kitchen and serving area at the conclusion of the day.

December: Meharry's FMIG collaborated with a local fiber arts studio, Falcon Feather Fibers, to create a hand-made quilt using original designs by the members of FMIG. A prayer was added on the back and a picture of the FMIG participants on the front. The quilt was given to a nursing home patient. FMIG delivered the quilt and spent time with the patient.

February: The project during February was to prepare Valentine's Day cards for senior citizen residents at a local nursing home. In addition to a card from Meharry's FMIG, each senior received a gift bag which included various items such as writing pads, a folding fan, and pen.. FMIG members spent the morning with the residents, keeping them company and sharing their time.

March: One of the highlights of the year for Meharry's FMIG was a health fair held at a local elementary school. The name of the fair was Project R.E.C.E.S.S. which stands for "Restoring Exercise, Cutting Calories, Exercising Hygiene, & Stopping Substance Abuse" and it was held in conjunction with our school's pediatrics club, SNMA and SNDA. The activities at the fair included relay races and exercise education, blood pressure screenings, healthy eating and food pyramid education, and a oral health demonstration. Each child received a gift bag with the Project R.E.C.E.S.S. logo on it, designed by FMIG, which contained various information (Cover Kids insurance information, smoking prevention information, Girl/Boy scout pamphlets) and gifts provided by FMIG (water bottles, yo-yo's, and frisbees). The food pyramids utilized by SNMA for their healthy eating booth were provided by FMIG as well as carrot, apple, and banana costumes. FMIG volunteers wore the costumes and encouraged the children to eat fruits and vegetables.

FMIG hosted 4 booths focused on smoking prevention:

- Jar of Tar: Molasses served as a representation of the tar that collects in the lungs after smoking a cigarette. The jar was held above the children and asked to guess what the contents were. Their answers ranged from syrup to poison and oil. They were then told that the jar was the amount of tar that collects in the lungs after a year of smoking one pack of cigarettes per day. The graphic illustration left a lasting impression on the students as they were educated on the effects of tar in the body.
- Smoking & Lungs: A display board on the "Hazards & Effects of Smoking" was shown to the children. The board highlighted different parts of the body and ranged from the costs involved with smoking to the dangers of second hand smoke. The children at the fair were in grades pre-kindergarten to third grade, so different facts were presented based on the age of the audience. A black lung model was available to demonstrate the reality of the damage smoking has on the lung. The children were given a basic anatomy lesson: the location of the lungs in the body and their normal color and consistency.
- Gasping for Air: Students participated in a straw breathing exercise to demonstrate how smoking affects breathing. They were instructed to hold their nose and breathe through the straw for 30 seconds. After a brief break to make sure the students had caught their breath, the students ran in place as quickly as they could for few seconds, then repeated the exercise. They were then asked if breathing was easier before running or after. The lesson was that it is much more difficult for a smoker to breath than a non-smoker.

- At the conclusion of completing each booth, students completed a worksheet drawing their portrait and stating "(Name) is smoke free!" and they were able to select from a number of prizes (squiggle yo-yo, kite, jump rope, Tar Wars bracelet, and airplane glider). The prizes were chosen to promote an active lifestyle.

During the planning process FMIG quickly emerged as a leader in the planning process by suggesting we solicit donations from local businesses for water and healthy snacks. Our community service chair drafted the letter that was used. To promote participation and encourage the children to complete each activity at the fair, Project R.E.C.E.S.S. "passports" were issued to each child. The passport had the logo of the fair in the middle and the name of each activity surrounding the logo. At the completion of each activity stickers were placed on the name of the booth just completed. The children absolutely loved the passport and clutched it as they went from booth to booth as if it were worth money! The passport idea and design was provided by FMIG's community service chair. The bags were tagged with Project R.E.C.E.S.S. labels provided by FMIG. We also had the largest number of booths (4) and volunteers for the day. Overall the entire fair was a tremendous success and all groups involved have committed to making it an annual event.

4. Professional Development: What activities does your FMIG do to promote professional and/or leadership development among its members? If you describe a program that has been in existence for a number of years, please explain its *current significance*.  
As stated Meharry's FMIG has undergone a significant positive transformation this academic year and there were not any programs already in existence when the 2008-2009 executive board was elected. To promote leadership we created several new executive board positions, such as Community Service Chair and Freshman Liaison. We plan to continue this trend next year by recruiting even more students to be a part of the executive board, to chair different events throughout the year, and to sign up as student coordinators. We also emailed the student body about summer externship and scholarship opportunities for which they may qualify. The National Conference for Students and Residents was presented to FMIG members along with the scholarship application at a general body meeting to promote attendance at the conference. This is an extraordinary improvement from last year, when the conference was not presented at all. Most students were unaware of the conference, but because they were provided adequate information and time, we have several students planning to attend and apply for the funding provided by AAFP.
5. Exposure to Family Medicine and Family Physicians: Tell us what your FMIG does to expose its members to family physicians – in your medical school or community – and how the scope of family medicine is demonstrated.  
We implemented a mentoring program this year to help expose students to family physicians. Mentors are both physicians and residents and are assigned to a maximum of three students. The physicians answer any questions students may have regarding the field of family medicine, including but not limited to salary, residency requirements, areas of specialization. Many of the physicians allowed the students to shadow as often as their schedules permit. Physicians were matched with students based on any common interests. For example, a physician who is certified in both Emergency Medicine and Family Medicine would be matched with a student who expressed interest in both fields. Students who obtained a Master's in Public Health prior to matriculation at Meharry Medical College were matched with physicians who also have an MPH degree. The goal of matching students and physicians based on "common interests" was to show students the versatility within the field of family medicine. We have a "Mentor Appreciation Dinner" scheduled for the month of April during which we will have a catered dinner and allow students to communicate with the physicians freely in an informal setting. The purpose of the dinner is to allow students to interact with family physicians other than their mentors. It also gives

opportunity for students who may not have become active in our FMIG prior to the deadline for obtaining a mentor to interact with the family physicians. The dinner provides the opportunity for our FMIG to express our gratitude to the physicians for their participation and encourage them to continue their relationship with their students as well as continue to serve as mentor for the next academic year. During our general body meetings, we invite family physicians to speak about different topics. Topics this year have included: "What is Family Medicine?", "Ways to Specialize in Family Medicine", "Residency Preparation & Advice", and "Caring for the Uninsured." We have invited physicians from different backgrounds (academic medicine, private practice and group practice). One of the themes throughout the year at the meetings was the versatility of family physicians: the diversity of patients, the opportunity to specialize in areas of interest, and the range of skills acquired as a family physician. A question and answer session was included in the agenda for each meeting and the physicians were happy to speak with students on a one-on-one basis at conclusion of the meetings.

6. Promoting the Value of Primary Care: Describe what your FMIG does to tell members about the role of family medicine in enhancing primary care. This could include talking about the patient-centered medical home and the primary care workforce or coordinating activities with other primary care interest groups (internal medicine, pediatrics, OB/GYN or emergency medicine). Our FMIG collaborated with other primary care interest groups for the Project R.E.C.E.S.S. health fair. We also participated in a panel discussion for National Primary Care week with AMSA. During each meeting, the role of family medicine in helping to eliminate health disparities (as described by the National Medical Association) was discussed. During "Cover the Uninsured" week, Dr. William M. Rodney described the model of Medicos, a clinic dedicated to providing care for the underserved and uninsured. He described in detail the financial benefits enjoyed by the family physicians under their model and how satisfying caring for the underserved population is. Also on the panel was Dr. Charles Ball, Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians' immediate past president. He and Dr. Rodney discussed in detail the meaning of the patient-centered medical home and how family physicians can serve in that role.
  
7. Measures of Success: What programming elements has your FMIG considered successful? How do you track measurable improvements? This could include increasing membership, showing improvements in Family Medicine match rates among active FMIG members, or receiving recognition from your medical school/state chapter/AAFP.  
We consider every event we have held this year as successful, because FMIG has historically been one of the least active interest groups on campus. One of the most significant measures of success is that our meetings were very well attended although we transitioned from noon to evening meetings. Our executive board voted to move the meetings to 5:30 p.m. because we observed last year that the meetings were not well attended by 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year medical students, advisors were unable to attend, and the time the speakers were allotted for their presentations was limited. We also wanted to attract students who have a definite interest in family medicine and/or primary care and we felt those who were willing to attend evening meetings had a more vested interest in family medicine, rather than only attending for free lunch. We were pleasantly surprised to see that as the year progressed our evening meetings' attendance progressively improved and we attracted as many students as last year's noon meetings. Another measure of success is the number of students who paid their dues (28). We found the monetary gain of the group was not important when encouraging students to pay their \$10 annual dues, but rather stressed the importance of paying dues because we knew students would show more dedication to participating in community service events and attending general body meetings if they had money invested. We also saw an increase in the number of students from Meharry who matched in Family Medicine for their residency choice; eleven students in the graduating class matched in Family Medicine in 2009. The overall presence of FMIG has improved this year. We were able

to purchase FMIG polo shirts for all dues' paying members of FMIG, purchase a vinyl banner for display at FMIG events, and display posters and postcards provided by AAFP/Virtual FMIG which advocated family medicine and as well as sparked interest in students who may not have previously been aware of FMIG or Family Medicine. Students often stopped FMIG members when wearing their shirts and asked what "FMIG" stood for and about Family Medicine, helping students advocate for Family Medicine outside of traditional meetings. Although we have not received official recognition from our state chapter (Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians), our advisors were praised at a regional conference for our FMIG's work this year by those at the state office, quoting it as the "best ever at Meharry."

8. Special Consideration for First-Time Applicants or Those Wanting to Show Significant Enhancement in Programming, Membership or Operation: If your FMIG has never submitted an application for this award, or if your FMIG has made significant strides in a particular area, tell us why you think you should be considered for this award. [If this does not apply to you, you do not need to fill out this section.]

Our current executive board is composed exclusively of first and second year medical students, with the majority being second year students. Last year, as first years, we entered medical school curious, eager and enthusiastic about Family & Community Medicine. As the year got underway, we were discouraged by the lack of advocacy for Family Medicine (despite our medical school's emphasis on the importance of primary care) by our FMIG and the lack of activities FMIG participated in or hosted. We had only two meetings the entire spring semester and one was to elect incoming officers. The newly elected officers (which at the time were all first year students) had great ideas on ways to improve the group. Several of those ideas included enhancing our financial standing, providing more informational meetings and programs, increasing FMIG's presence on campus as hosts of various events and increasing community involvement.

At the close of the 2007-2008 academic year, we had less than \$300 in our bank account. We used our summer as an opportunity to fundraise so that when the new academic year began, we would have enough money to fund our meetings and events. We participated in a Scratchcard Fundraiser and raised approximately \$275. Every member of the executive board was given two scratchcard booklets. E-board members invited supporters to scratch off one or more of the 60 colored circles on the card that revealed the amount they were committed to donating, ranging from FREE to \$2.50. Each supporter was given a national brandname coupon sheet as a thank you. The coupons included national chains such as Jiffy Lube, Blockbuster, TCBY and more. Our president and vice president also attended the National Conference for Medical Students and Residents held in July. Our president participated in a seminar entitled "Virtual FMIG". She learned about the resources available to FMIG organizations as well as funding for which we were eligible. As a result of the knowledge gained from the conference, we also applied for a grant from our state chapter of AAFP. Additionally, our dues paying members more than tripled from last year.. As illustrated, the financial status of Meharry's FMIG greatly improved within the last year.

To advocate Family Medicine as a specialty and improve the presence of the FMIG on campus, we had customized FMIG polo shirts ordered. As mentioned under question 5, we also implemented a mentoring program, through which members of the FMIG who paid the group's annual dues (\$10) were matched with family practitioners. The students were encouraged to ask their mentors questions, allowed to shadow, and interact with them at the aforementioned "Mentor Appreciation Dinner".

Below is a summary of all remaining non-community service activities, updates, and improvements FMIG held during 2008-2009, none of which have ever been done before at Meharry.

- **Introductory Meeting:** An introduction to the Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG), its purpose, officers, and open executive board positions were presented and filled. Students were given the opportunity to sign up for AAFP and given hand-outs about frequently asked questions about Family Medicine. The "new" agenda for Meharry's FMIG was introduced - more involvement, more community service, more exposure to family medicine. The community service committee was also formed. Dues were collected from several new members. This meeting served to build excitement about upcoming activities and the direction FMIG planned to take for the school year.
- **"What is Family Medicine?"- General Meeting:** We had two invited guests, the chairperson of Meharry's Family Medicine Department and one of FMIG's advisors serve as speakers. They presented their background, why they chose family medicine, and how they became involved with academic medicine. They discussed what family medicine is, how it differs from other primary care specialties, their typical day, the salary scale of a typical family physician, their family lives, and the amount of versatility available within Family Medicine. Pre- and Post-tests were administered as outlined by the requirements of the grant available through AAFP.
- **Specializing in Family Medicine - General Meeting:** One of the physicians from Meharry Medical College who specialized in geriatrics spoke about the different ways future physicians can specialize within family medicine, including fellowships, additional electives, job exposure, and continuing education training. One point, of which most students seemed unaware, that he emphasized is that the reimbursement (or pay) for a family physician and a specialist who perform the same procedure is identical. For example, an endoscopy performed by a family physician and a gastroenterologist is billed and reimbursed the same way and amount. This detail seemed to increase interest among students in Family Medicine.
- **Preparing for Residency - General Meeting:** The Residency Director and FMIG co-advisor spoke at this meeting along with two senior residents from Meharry's Family Medicine Residency Program. The focus was how to prepare for residency and the interview process, ways to choose a program, and how to be successful while in residency. The residents gave insight into the challenges of residency, why they chose Meharry to complete their training and how to successfully prepare and pass board exams.
- **"Cover the Uninsured" - Panel Discussion:** We constructed a panel of diverse speakers, including three family physicians, one from private practice, one from academic medicine, and one from a clinic/group practice, and two representatives from Alive Hospice, a non-profit hospice located in Middle Tennessee. Facts about uninsured Americans and statistics were presented as an introduction and the panelists answered prepared questions from our FMIG president as well as questions posed by the audience.
- **Scholarship Alerts and Externship opportunity updates** were emailed to eligible applicants regularly.
- **The Meharry FMIG website** was updated with current officers and photos of events.
- **A scrapbook documenting all of our events** was created by our historian. This well-constructed book was also submitted to our student government executive board with consideration for the Meharry Student Organization of the Year award.



The amount of community service performed by Meharry's FMIG has been unparalleled by any other group (see question 3) on campus. We are extremely proud of the accomplishments we made this year and fully intend to continue the trend next year. Within one year we were able to change the reputation of Meharry's FMIG to a leader among speciality interest groups.

To continue the outstanding legacy of leadership, we will draft a Meharry FMIG manual which will include executive board offices and descriptions, policies and procedures specific to our school such as room reservations, funding information and instructions, and more. This manual will serve as a guide to assist future FMIG's in their planning and execution of activities for years to come.

***Thank you for your submission!***