

Bush Medical Fellows Program Guidelines (continued)

"The success of rural health care systems is tied to the leadership of a community. Rural communities need to collaborate with their neighboring communities and gain from each other's leadership. Health care will have its best outcomes when it is not viewed as a commodity but a fundamental human service interwoven into the fabric of the community."

This rural family physician further developed his leadership and management skills in order to help assure the continued effective functioning of his rural clinic network and to work for health system change that will be more equitable and responsive for rural communities.

DESCRIPTION

Each year, the Bush Medical Fellows Program awards approximately 13 fellowships that enable physicians to take a leave of absence from their practices to pursue professional and personal goals that address the health needs of their communities. Their programs are self designed and self managed; they may last from three to 12 months if done full time, but can be spread over three years. During this time, the fellowship provides a monthly stipend, as well as other financial aid.

At the end of their fellowships, physicians return to work with increased confidence, greater skills and improved leadership abilities. As they apply these enhanced skills, knowledge and leadership, communities benefit in turn from improved patient care and health care services. The new or enhanced leadership skills of the fellow further increase the impact on communities.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants to the program must be:

- Physicians currently practicing in Minnesota, North Dakota or South Dakota.
- At least 35 years old and at least 10 years out of medical or osteopathic college at the time of application.
- Able to articulate community needs and their ability to positively address those needs through a fellowship.
- Able to state clearly their needs and opportunities for application of new skills and knowledge, as it relates to their own career development.

Previous Bush Medical Fellows may not reapply.

If a physician (or his or her spouse) is an elected official or public policymaker, the applicant may receive a grant for a degree-granting program only.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The Bush Medical Fellows Program's primary purpose is to improve health care delivery in the community. This improvement or impact may be broad (across a large organization or state) or deep (within one physician's practice). A community will benefit from its provider's fellowship in several ways:

- Through further developed *leadership skills*
- Through the *enhanced clinical and administrative skills* of their providers
- Through *new projects and services* started by the fellows
- Through *improved referral linkages, networks and new partnerships*

Leadership skills

The first focus area of the Bush Foundation's "Goals for a Decade"—Develop Courageous Leaders and Engage Entire Communities in Solving Problems—recognizes the important role that community leaders, such as physicians, can play in creating vibrant communities. Fellowships are one of the Foundation's strategies for engaging existing leaders to improve the leadership they offer in "communities" (defined broadly by geography, affiliation, profession, fields of endeavor, faith, culture or demographics).

Enhanced clinical and administrative skills

The first step in this process is to ensure that fellowship applicants develop their professional abilities in conjunction with the needs of the communities they serve. Significant changes will have occurred in both the clinical and business environments of health care, as well as in the needs of communities, since graduating from medical school. In some cases, physicians may have moved outside their original area of training, led by personal interest, a need in their communities or the introduction of new technology. Additional training allows them to become more knowledgeable and able to respond to the changing needs of the healthcare community. In all cases, the program enables physicians to make a concentrated effort to gain additional training in a way that would be impossible while maintaining a clinical practice.

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"It was wonderful to be in a circle of trust where I felt that I could bring my authentic self and really be heard, and also where I could hear other people's stories and be present for them. I was able to reconnect with my most deeply held values and to be clear about the meaning and purpose that I have found in being a healer."

This developmental and behavioral pediatrician began his fellowship by studying the relationship between children's spirituality and their health. His work evolved to include training to become a group facilitator, something that "wasn't even on the horizon for me before."

New projects and services

Bush Medical Fellows have helped to start or improve a broad range of health care services in their communities: palliative and hospice care; chronic pain clinics; medical information systems; guidelines for acute myocardial infarction treatment; geriatric care; alternative care for obesity, menopause and depression.

Improved referral linkages, networks and new partnerships

Fellows return to their communities feeling more competent. They often forge valuable relationships with specialists and networks from outside the communities they serve who have participated in their retraining. These specialists become resources to the fellow's community through retained networking, mentoring or consulting partnership with the fellow. Because of the contacts made during a fellowship, some specialists and mentors will provide service to the fellow's home community.

PERSONAL BENEFITS

For many physicians, a fellowship marks the beginning of an extended period of growth, which continues long after their studies are completed. Planned activities and unexpected opportunities have led to:

- Enhanced skills and knowledge.
- Increased confidence in capabilities.
- Better understanding of community health care needs.
- New professional roles.
- New interests and challenges.
- Excitement about learning.
- Accomplishments far beyond original goals.
- Enriched family relationships.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING MORE

There is a common thread that runs through the reasons physicians give for their decisions to apply to the Bush Medical Fellows Program. Many reported great personal satisfaction as they became physicians and established themselves in their communities but later found themselves looking for something more. They were yearning for the time and energy to continue to grow personally and professionally—commodities in short supply for any physician in mid career. They also saw the growing problems and challenges of health care delivery and wanted to gain the skills necessary to influence positive change.

RENEWAL

Fellows report renewed energy and enthusiasm at the end of their studies. They say they have increased confidence in their clinical and leadership abilities and renewed pride in their medical practices and a better understanding of what it will take to improve health of the communities they serve. Most not only reaffirm their choice to practice medicine, they also form commitments to developing new dimensions in their professional and personal situations. They re-enter their practice with a resolve to control the pace of their work; to make time for personal growth, their families and their avocations; and to expand their interests to include leadership in their communities.

Courage to Imagine

As a way to enhance the fellowship experience, the Bush Medical Fellows Program offers each fellow (and a guest) the opportunity to participate in a retreat series, *Courage to Imagine*. Based on the work of Parker Palmer, this four-part series allows participants to connect who they are with what they do.

Past fellows describe the experience:

- "This has helped me stay strong in my belief that I need to take a period of time off work."
- "It created space for my self-discovery process, affirming the creative tension and the value of the journey without knowing the outcome."
- "It helped me get in the right frame of mind. Made me realize the importance and value placed on rejuvenation, both physical and spiritual."
- "This experience complements all else I've done and gives time for meaningful reflection, correction of course and validation of purpose."
- "No judgment, no critical comments, just support and appreciation! Really nice atmosphere!"

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SELECTION PROCESS

There are three phases of fellowship selection:

- The *application process*
- The *application review by the Policy Board*
- The *selection seminar*

Application process

The application process is intended to help potential fellows evaluate and clarify their career goals. In addition to supplying personal background information, applicants are asked to assess and define the needs of their communities, as well as their own professional requirements. Once these needs have been defined, applicants should be able to plan a course of study and activity that addresses both.

Applicants should contact Michael Wilcox, M.D., the program's director, or Alice Sanborn, assistant director, for assistance with the development of these plans. Applicants may contact either at (952) 442-2420. **We strongly recommend that you contact them for this purpose.**

Applications are available from the program office at (952) 442-2420, or from the Bush Foundation at (651) 227-0891. You may also download them at www.bushfoundation.org or request them by writing to Bush Medical Fellows Program, 299 Lakeview Terrace Boulevard, Waconia, MN 55387. **All applications must be submitted by mail and must be postmarked by March 1, 2009.**

Review by the Policy Board

The Policy Board meets in March to review applications and select the candidates who will move forward in the process. The Policy Board, made up of physicians and others involved in the health care industry, will assess each applicant's proposed program in terms of its potential benefit to the community and to the candidate. In addition, Policy Board members assess the qualifications of each applicant as evidenced by the individual's interests, achievements and articulation of community needs. Policy Board members must be convinced that the program is practical, appropriate to the applicant's goals and demonstrates a benefit to the community of need. Selected candidates may be provided with written suggestions as to how they might improve their program.

Selection seminar

Selected applicants participate in a two-day seminar that is held in May. Both the candidates and their partners are guests of the Foundation for this event. During this final phase of the selection process, the candidates may continue to develop and modify their programs of study as they hear presentations from previous fellows, interact with other candidates and participate in interviews conducted by a panel of physicians and others knowledgeable about health care delivery. Not all participants invited to this seminar will be selected as fellows.

Participants are notified of the reviewers' decisions within a week of the seminar. Fellowship awards are based on the reviewers' estimates of how well the applicant's program satisfies current or anticipated community needs and the likelihood that the applicant can achieve the defined goals. The Bush Foundation publishes the names of the fellows in its magazine and annual report and sends a press release to regional and national media.

PLANNING A PROGRAM OF STUDY

Each program of study will be as individual as the physician who creates it.

Activities may include preceptorships, conferences, seminars, retreats, site visits, pursuit of a degree, courses at medical schools or other academic institutions, university programs (other than residency programs), reading, writing, teaching or lecturing (or any combination of these activities).

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Most degree-granting programs require passing scores on standardized tests. Applicants who plan to attend such programs may want to take these tests and/or apply to these programs before March 1, 2009.

CLINICAL AND/OR MANAGEMENT AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Generally, applicants for clinical programs begin by identifying areas of medical skill or knowledge that, when fully developed, will correspond to identified community needs, as well as personal interest. Applicants interested in administrative or policy development programs may plan to attend a single institution or may design their own program consisting of courses and preceptorships.

Clinical

Acceptable clinical programs of study generally include from one to three areas of clinical study with supplementary experiences in areas such as personal development, medical teaching, epidemiology, public policy in health care, and ethical and legal issues.

Some examples of what fellows have accomplished after completing these types of programs include development of home health care systems, improvement of emergency medical systems, development of hospice principles in rural care, reorganization of perinatal programs in rural hospitals and restructuring of critical care services.

Management and policy development

When the program awards fellowships that are primarily for management and policy development training, it is with the expectation that recipients are preparing themselves for major management and leadership positions in the health care industry.

These applications should:

- Provide evidence of the applicant's leadership ability and management experience.
- Show how the training received during the fellowship will be used.
- Demonstrate clearly how such a position will help communities address particular issues.

FELLOWSHIP REQUIREMENTS

- Fellows must complete their program of study within three years of receiving the fellowship. They may study in segments or part time, if necessary.
- Fellows must submit brief monthly summaries to report on program activities, additional or secondary experiences, progress in meeting original goals and the quality of their learning experiences.

BEFORE SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Before applicants submit their applications, applicants should review their proposed program of study with representatives of one or more of the institutions at which they wish to study. Applicants should solicit input from established leaders within the community of need. In most cases, applicants should select a preceptor or mentor who will provide guidance throughout the program of study. Michael Wilcox, M.D., Bush Medical Fellows program director, and Alice Sanborn, assistant director, are available to advise applicants and fellows; they can be reached at (952) 442-2420. Senior fellows and Policy Board members are also available as advisors and mentors.

KEEP IN MIND

The Bush Medical Fellows Program is an educational program intended to provide additional training for physicians; it is not for the support, design or implementation of specific projects.

Race, sex or religion will have no bearing on the selection of fellows. We will keep the information applicants furnish confidential, and it will be used only by the program staff, Policy Board and selection panels. Applicants should make copies of their applications for their own use, as we cannot return the application or provide copies.

Applicant files are confidential to the program; however, the Minnesota Historical Society archives approved fellowship applications and makes them available to the public in 50 years.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The staff of the Bush Medical Fellows Program consists of the program director and assistant director. The Bush Medical Fellows Policy Board serves in an advisory capacity and in the selection of grant recipients. The 10-member Board consists of physicians and non-physicians who are knowledgeable in health care issues.

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These guidelines and the application form are available at www.bushfoundation.org.

If you have questions, please contact Michael Wilcox, M.D., or Alice Sanborn at (952) 442-2420 or (952) 758-4144.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

During the three- to 12-month fellowship period, the program provides financial allowances for stipend, tuition and travel. The amount of support may vary from year to year.

Stipend: Intended to make up partially for lost income while the fellow is away from the practice of medicine.

Tuition: Funds may be used for books, conferences, tuition or other education.

Travel: Funds may be used for airfare, auto mileage and lodging expenses.

2009 GRANT AMOUNTS

Stipend: \$5,000 per month

Tuition: \$4,000 per program (an additional allowance of up to \$10,000 may be granted at the time of selection to reimburse 50 percent of tuition expenses over \$4,000)

Travel: \$3,000 per program (an additional allowance of up to \$3,000 may be awarded at the time of selection to reimburse 50 percent of travel expenses over \$3,000)

BUSH FOUNDATION REQUIREMENTS

Fellows are required to make monthly requisitions for stipend and expenses reimbursement. During the period of the fellowship, net income from the stipend and the physician's practice may not exceed net compensation from the physician's practice during the comparable period in the preceding year.

IRS REQUIREMENTS

For most fellows, stipend payments are subject to state and federal taxes. The Bush Foundation does not report stipend, tuition and travel expense payments to the Internal Revenue Service. Fellows are encouraged to keep accurate personal records of their payments and to consult their tax advisors about the tax liabilities of fellowship benefits.