

IV. Educational Program

A. Curriculum components

5. ACGME Competencies

d. Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Common Program Requirement:

5. *ACGME Competencies*

The program must integrate the following ACGME competencies into the curriculum:

a) *Interpersonal and Communication Skills*

Residents must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and health professionals. Residents are expected to:

- (1) *communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public, as appropriate, across a broad range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds;*
- (2) *communicate effectively with physicians, other health professionals, and health related agencies;*
- (3) *work effectively as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group;*
- (4) *act in a consultative role to other physicians and health professionals; and,*
- (5) *maintain comprehensive, timely, and legible medical records, if applicable.*

[As further specified by the Review Committee]

Explanation:

This competency domain consists of two distinct skill sets, **communication skills** (used to perform specific tasks such as obtain a history, obtain informed consent, telephone triage, present a case, write a consultation note, inform patients of a diagnosis and therapeutic plan) and **interpersonal skills** (inherently relation and process oriented, such as relieving anxiety, establishing trusting relationships). The outcome “communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public...” requires good verbal, non-verbal and written communication skills, but also requires good relationship-building skills. A structured curriculum may include both didactics and experiential components for addressing verbal, non-verbal, and written communication skills as well as modes of interactions that contribute to relationship building across a broad range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Interactive teaching methods may include role playing, review of videotapes, and small group discussion of vignettes. **Teamwork** training is also needed. “On-the-job” training without structured teaching is not sufficient for this skill. Simulation is increasingly used as an effective method for teamwork training. (See several articles in the [ACGME Bulletin December, 2005](#).) A final but very important area in this competency domain relates to completing and maintaining comprehensive, timely and legible **medical records**. Programs must have a mechanism in place for monitoring and evaluating this skill as well as providing timely formative feedback.

There may be specialty-specific requirements for Interpersonal & Communication Skills.