



September 25, 2017

AFMRD Members

AFMRD was asked to sign on to the Shared Principles of Primary Care as presented by the Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaborative and Family Medicine for America's Health (FMAHealth). The AFMRD Board of Directors discussed this request at length. While in principle we support the ideas and values in the document, at this time we cannot agree to be a signatory. Our objections to the document stem from omission of a statement that primary care teams should include primary care physicians.

As an organization whose membership is entirely made up of physicians whose primary responsibility is to train family physicians, we cannot support a document that speaks about primary care and the teamwork needed to produce best outcomes, yet lacks a unifying statement that such teams should include primary care physicians. We strongly believe that this omission is detrimental to the specialty of family medicine and counterproductive to the effort of the FMAHealth Workforce Tactic Team to increase the number of students choosing family medicine. We fear that this document could easily be used to discourage medical students from choosing family medicine, instead encouraging primary care delivery by non-physician care providers who lack the training and expertise of family physicians. While their role is important in the overall health of Americans, it should not be overstated nor equated to the role of the primary care physician, especially the family physician.

With the Workforce Tactic Team goal of having at least 25 percent of all graduates from US medical Schools enter family medicine training programs by the year 2030, we can ill afford anything that can be perceived as a negative attitude toward the future of family physicians. Our board found it too easy to imagine an advisor speaking to a young medical student and using this document to persuade them to avoid family medicine in favor of another specialty. If we are a signatory, we believe we would be giving a hypocritical message that family physicians are not necessary. Our mission has always been to prepare family medicine resident physicians for future practice, many of whom will go on to provide care in communities where they are providing important access to primary care. We take physician training responsibility seriously with the belief that family physicians help provide the highest quality care. We are committed to increasing the number of family physicians and fear that this document could hinder these efforts.

Many of you will remember the Joint Principles of the Patient-Centered Medical Home. AFMRD continues to support this document, and it remains in place today. It is not being replaced by the Shared Principles of Primary Care.

The PCPCC and FMAHealth have published the Shared Principles of Primary Care on their websites. We believe in the spirit of these shared principles. However, it is the omission of language that supports the continued role of physicians on primary care teams that causes your AFMRD Board to refrain from the endorsement and promotion of this document. You should know that we stated our willingness to work on other efforts to promote primary care physicians, with a focus on family physicians in particular. On your behalf, the AFMRD Board of Directors remains committed both to primary care principles and to supporting physicians on primary care teams.

Sincerely,

Karen Mitchell, MD, FAAFP
AFMRD President