

New pathway for training physicians may lead to greater numbers in academic medicine

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In an effort to address the shortage of available clinician-educators to train future physicians, academic leaders from Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) and Boston Medical Center (BMC), are implementing a unique dermatology residency program that emphasizes support in the transition from trainee to junior faculty member through an extended commitment to the institution in which their training was received.

The Dermatology Residency Training Program at BUSM has been restructured to encompass a traditional residency [training program](#) (three years) followed by a career-focused faculty program (three years). This new paradigm aims to develop well-rounded dermatologists with careers focused on teaching, patient care and research, who will become leaders in academia, and make significant contributions to the specialty. Junior faculty participating in this program will be provided with personalized career development courses and structured mentorship directed toward their academic interests. This program is described in a Letter to the Editor in the journal *Academic Medicine*.

Medicine in general has experienced a reduction in the number of physicians in academic practice due to economic factors and recruitment /retention issues. In dermatology, for example, only 6 percent of physicians practice in an academic environment. "These problems create unwelcomed fluctuations in faculty numbers and availability and

willingness to teach the next generation of leaders in our specialty," explained lead author Rhoda Alani, MD, the Herbert Mescon Endowed Professor and Chair of Dermatology at BUSM and BMC.

"In order to address this problem we plan to provide our trainees with the tools they need to succeed as strong academic leaders and educators and, in so doing, fill a much needed gap in the physician workforce," she added.

Alani believes that such a program, if successful, could significantly impact the way physicians are trained in the U.S. and may similarly serve the institutional or regional needs of other specialties. She feels this template for physician training is mirrored from training programs supported by the U.S. military in which physicians are obligated to serve in a military setting following completion of training through a military residency program.

Also contributing to this letter was Allison Larson, MD, assistant dean of academic affairs and assistant professor in dermatology, BUSM and Vincent Falanga, MD, FACP, professor of [dermatology](#) and residency program director, Department of Dermatology, BUSM.

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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