



aaPM&R

American Academy of
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Physiatrists: Advocates for Inclusive Health

WHAT IS INCLUSIVE HEALTH?

The **intentional inclusion** of people with intellectual disabilities (ID) in mainstream health policies and laws, programming, research, and training programs.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

- People with ID are at increased risk for **poor health outcomes** and health disparities. The lack of health care provider-training on disability patient populations has been highlighted as a key determinant.
- People with ID experience a wide variety of **health disparities**, as a result of exclusion from mainstream health care systems.

HOW CAN PM&R PROGRAM DIRECTORS AND CHAIRS ADVOCATE FOR INCLUSIVE HEALTH?

Provide residents with exposure to patients with ID. The Special Olympics' MedFest program is one way for resident programs to gain experience in the area of inclusive health.

“Through inclusive health education, we can improve physicians' exposure to patients with intellectual disability during medical training, an essential step toward providing quality care for people with ID.”

—**Darryl L. Kaelin, MD**, Professor and Division Chief, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, University of Louisville

MEDFEST OVERVIEW

More than 2.5 million Special Olympics athletes in more than 175 countries participate in games and events organized by Special Olympics each year. But before they lace up their skates, put on a swimsuit, or step on the playing field, Special Olympics athletes are required to have a comprehensive sports physical. Many athletes can't afford this expense.

MedFest offers Special Olympics Programs a fast and effective way to recruit new athletes and retain existing athletes by offering free sports physicals. Screenings assess blood pressure, temperature, pulse, height, weight, body mass index, vision, hearing, medical history, potential medication side effects and general physical health.

Carolinas Medical Center/Carolinas Rehabilitation has been participating in the MedFest program for several years. Along with helping the athletes succeed, its residents have benefited greatly from the program, learning valuable leadership lessons as well as how to administer care to those with ID.



Special Olympics
Healthy Athletes®

Special Olympics is the largest global public health organization dedicated to serving people with intellectual disabilities—not just in the area of sports, but also in the area of health. Through Special Olympics MedFest, clinical volunteers provide free pre-participation physical exams to athletes with ID.

Read on to learn more about this initiative and one residency program's experience helping Special Olympics athletes.

THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY SERVICE WITH PROGRAMS THAT SERVE PEOPLE WITH ID, SUCH AS SPECIAL OLYMPICS MEDFEST, PMR RESIDENTS PRACTICE AND APPLY SKILLS RELATED TO:

- **Medical Knowledge:** Residents must *apply knowledge* to patient care.
- **Patient Care:** Residents must demonstrate competence in the evaluation and management of *patients with physical and/or cognitive impairments, disabilities, and functional limitations*.
- **Practice-based Learning:** Residents must participate in the *education* of patients, families, students, residents and other health professionals.
- **Interpersonal and Communication Skills:** Residents must *communicate effectively* with patients, families, and the public, as appropriate, across a broad range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.
- **Professionalism:** Residents must demonstrate *sensitivity and responsiveness to a diverse patient population*, including but not limited to diversity in gender, age, culture, race, religion, disabilities, and sexual orientation.
- **Systems-Based Practice:** Residents *must work effectively in various health care delivery settings* and systems relevant to their clinical specialty.

“Residents who participate in MedFest learn leadership, accountability, social justice, and professionalism, in addition to learning about the unique needs of those with intellectual disability, both medical and socio-economically. I am sure that participation in MedFest remains a highlight for each and every resident who graduates from our program.”

—**William L. Bockenek**, Professor and Chair of PM&R, Carolinas Medical Center/Carolinas Rehabilitation, Chief Medical Officer, Carolinas Rehabilitation

CAN PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY SERVICE FULFILL ACGME COMPETENCIES?

Yes!

Want to learn more about how YOU can be involved with inclusive health?
Visit the online Center for Inclusive Health at
<https://inclusivehealth.specialolympics.org/health-care-providers>.
