



MENTOR CLINICIAN PROGRAM

How to implement the MCP at your institution

The University of California at San Diego's [Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion](#) is excited to announce it is seeking medical school partners to plan for implementation of the novel Mentor Clinician Program (MCP) at their own institution. Developed by the [Center for Mentorship in Medicine](#) at the Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion, under the direction of Dr. Chris Cannavino, the Mentor Clinician Program has revolutionized the clerkship experience at UC San Diego over the last nine years. Originally established in the pediatrics clerkship, the MCP is now embedded in all six core third-year clerkships at UC San Diego and is an integral experience in the UC San Diego School of Medicine curriculum.

What is the Mentor Clinician Program?

Over the years, the landscape of medical education has evolved due to many factors, including pressures on teaching faculty and new medical training system requirements. This results in a lack of contextual learning, cognitive apprenticeship, and focus on neglected topics essential to the practice of medicine. The MCP aims to address these challenges by transforming *how* we train future physicians, by delivering individualized mentorship and coaching to medical students from experienced medical educators, with an emphasis on clinical skill development and compassionate care.

In the MCP, experienced medical educators with strong clinical and humanistic skills are provided with protected time to serve as Mentor Clinicians (MCs). MCs are paired with medical students to provide longitudinal mentoring and coaching during each third-year clerkship, which is customized to individual students' personal goals and stage of development. Students receive approximately 125 hours with a MC throughout the academic year.

Mentor Clinicians play a critical role in the following ways:

- Act as third-party observers in a teaching-only role to directly observe medical students' clinical skills, deductive reasoning, and interpersonal communication
- Provide high-quality, non-evaluative feedback and coaching on both the science and the art of medicine, customized to each student
- Establish a safe learning environment to nurture the development of the next generation of clinically astute and self-aware physicians

What have we learned from the Mentor Clinician Program evaluations?

The MCP has been rigorously evaluated over the years, with publications in progress. Students and Mentor Clinicians have provided their perspectives in evaluations, and we have found positive outcomes for both student and mentor clinician.

Some of the essential findings include:

- Students report that the individualized and non-evaluative feedback they receive in the MCP improves their skill development in history and physical, differential diagnosis, presentation, and clinical reasoning skills
- Students feel the MCP improves their communication skills and ability to provide compassionate and empathic care to patients
- Students report increased satisfaction with the overall educational experience within the clerkship
- Data shows a healthy symbiotic relationship between clinical faculty and Mentor Clinicians; MCs can individually coach the learner with protected time, allowing clinical faculty to efficiently teach content and model excellent patient care in a busy clinical environment

"This was by far the most beneficial part of my 3rd year clinical experience. This was the first time I had an unbiased teacher there strictly to teach me how to improve. Overall, this program made me more confident – reassured what I was already doing well, where I could use more practice, and followed-up longitudinally. I made more improvements in a single month than I have in three years. I feel so much more prepared for 4th year and any future rotation because of this."

—Student Reflection

"This is a fantastic program that has allowed me, as a third-party observer, the unique opportunity to give detailed feedback and coaching to medical students in a manner that is not possible given the time constraints and lack of longitudinal exposure in the clinical environment. It's been amazing to see firsthand the students' rapid clinical skill development in both the science and art of medicine."

—Mentor Clinician Reflection

What are the necessary steps to bring the Mentor Clinician Program to your institution?

Our dream is for every medical student to experience this kind of compassionate coaching from skilled clinicians with protected time. As a first step, we are seeking a small number of medical schools to serve as pilot partners to plan, develop, and hopefully implement the Mentor Clinician Program in the pediatrics clerkship at their own institution. We will provide time-limited funding, planning sessions, implementation materials, evaluation support, and ongoing guidance to ensure the success of the pediatrics MCP at your institution.

We envision the general process to initiate with a two-stage application over two years:

- 1. Stage 1**

The first stage application and award will essentially serve as a feasibility study to better understand the supports and barriers to a potential MCP implementation at your institution.

- 2. Stage 2**

Institutions who demonstrate strong feasibility after the first stage will be invited to apply to the second stage, which would provide funding to support the actual implementation of the pediatrics MCP at your institution. Both stages will be supported with Sanford Institute funding, as we recognize the dedicated time needed for both planning and implementing, however, the Stage 2 awardees will be funded at a greater amount to support actual implementation.

On the following page, we propose our general five-year timeline with core activities to initiate the pediatrics MCP at your institution.

Year 1: Academic Year 2024-25

- Attend the MCP Zoom info session on November 14, 2024 from 12 - 1 p.m. PST
- Stage 1 applications released, submitted, and awarded by early winter 2025
- MOU established with Stage 1 awardees; \$10,000 award for planning and feasibility review. Ideally, this award would be dedicated to an individual at your institution who will serve as an MCP Director (a role dedicated to organizing feasibility review and what's needed to make the program a success at your institution).
- Note: Feasibility report should be submitted by summer 2025

Year 2: Academic Year 2025-26

- Stage 2 applications released fall 2025 to those who completed Stage 1 process and demonstrated strong feasibility
- Stage 2 applications reviewed and up to 4 pilot partners awarded
- Up to \$25,000 award for each pilot partner to begin planning for MCP implementation; award should be dedicated to MCP Director as identified in Stage 1 for program implementation. Funds can be used in other helpful ways to support planning, such as stipends for additional people who will be active in planning process.
- Partner institution collects pre-intervention data

Year 3: Academic Year 2026-27

- Partner begins implementation of MCP in pediatrics clerkship
- Sanford Institute will provide up to \$75,000 for the academic year; partner institution is expected to provide matching funds up to \$75,000 to support the MCP implementation
- Partner institution collects intervention data
- Sanford Institute will host first annual in-person MCP Summit for all pilot sites to provide faculty development and community building

Year 4: Academic Year 2027-28

- Sanford Institute provides up to \$75,000 for the academic year
- Partner institution matches up to \$75,000
- Partner institution collects intervention data
- Sanford Institute hosts annual in-person MCP Summit

Year 5: Academic Year 2028-29

- The MCP should be fully sustained at the partner institution
- No funding will be provided by the Sanford Institute this year or thereafter
- Annual MCP summit hosted either by Sanford Institute or at one of the partner institutions