



# AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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## F O U N D A T I O N

### **Abstract of Study Funded with a Research Stimulation Grant in 2011**

#### **Exploring the Impact of Debt and Potential Income on Second Year Medical Students' Career Planning (G1108RS)**

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#### **Abstract**

Both high educational debt and the growing income gap between primary care physicians and specialists deter some students from pursuing primary care careers. However, little is understood about which students are most influenced by financial factors, and why some students are influenced more than others. This qualitative study will identify the range of diverse ways that second year medical students consider their debt and their potential future income as they explore career choices. As part of their Health Policy course, second year medical students at Michigan State University College of Human Medicine (MSU-CHM) will be asked to respond to an open-ended essay question about their debt, their possible future income, and how this shapes their future career plans. Three researchers will analyze the essays using an immersion and crystallization approach to identify emergent themes. The researchers will then code the results, critically examine the themes, and identify predictive discourse. Member checking will be employed by discussing the results with a convenience sample of second year medical students. Results will be presented at a national conference and submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Depending on the data, results may be used to 1) interview a smaller group of students considering primary care careers; 2) develop focus group questions to explore the informal curriculum about debt and money in the culture of medical education; 3) develop a quantitative instrument assessing students' financial attitudes; and/or 4) develop curriculum about financial issues and career choices.