

## The Three-Year Pathway, Refined

Few moments in a medical student's life are more pivotal—and stressful—than the residency match. It consumes much of the fourth year of medical school, as students travel for interviews and do “away” rotations, which are more or less auditions for residency.

As an alternative, in 2013 NYU School of Medicine launched the novel Three-Year MD Pathway, a program that allows select students who are certain of which specialty they want to pursue to skip the final year altogether and start residency one year sooner than conventional students. Last summer, in a testament to the program's success, 15 of the 16 members of the inaugural class graduated, entering residency programs, mostly at NYU Langone.

So far, the compressed schedule hasn't hampered performance. In fact, it's done just the opposite. “Third-year students outperformed fourth-year students in terms of clinical skills and knowledge on tests conducted in our simulation center last spring,” reports Steven B. Abramson, MD, vice dean for education, faculty, and academic affairs, and chair of the Department of Medicine.

While members of the debut class had to be accepted into the pathway—making their residency choice on day one of medical school—members of subsequent classes can now apply for accelerated study midway through their first year. The opportunity to “opt in” later is proving popular: in the second class, 12 students were

accepted at the outset of medical school and 10 more opted in.

NYU School of Medicine will continue to evaluate students in the program and follow them through their residencies. “This isn't just a fast track,” says Joan Cangiarella, MD, director of the Three-Year MD Pathway and associate dean for education, faculty, and academic affairs. “It's also a unique opportunity to follow and assess learners across the continuum of undergraduate-graduate medical education.”

As part of that broader effort, NYU School of Medicine leads a consortium of 12 medical schools with three-year accelerated medical pathway programs—up from 8 the year before. Supported by a four-year, \$250,000 grant from the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, the consortium aims to set national standards for accelerated pathways, provide opportunities for collaboration, and offer guidance to institutions considering the implementation of an accelerated program. “Our big goal over the next few years is getting the rest of the medical profession to accept the notion of an accelerated pathway,” Dr. Abramson concludes. ■



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