

## **Integrating midlevel practitioners into a teaching service.**

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Meeting the educational needs and requirements of surgical resident physicians while achieving optimal patient care is a challenge for program directors. Midlevel practitioners (MLPs) were employed by a large community teaching hospital to augment the surgical teaching service, to improve continuity of patient care, and to provide resident physicians with greater flexibility to participate in classroom, operative, and clinical educational experiences. The MLPs were carefully integrated into the surgical program by creating the necessary buy-in, developing positive relationships, decreasing resistance, and reinforcing acceptance when demonstrated. MLPs function at the level of junior resident physicians and are active participants in the teaching and evaluation process. Structurally, MLPs receive their assignments from and report to the chief resident physician, but are ultimately responsible to the program director. Instituting the program required providing financial justification to administration and flexibility in meeting the diverse needs of the four teams. As a result, surgical resident physicians have been sufficiently freed from service activities to be able to capitalize on learning activities that range from surgeries to conferences. MLPs can be integrated into a surgical teaching program and become a positive force in the education of resident physicians.

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