

# Kern National Network for Caring and Character in Medicine

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The Kern National Network for Caring and Character in Medicine (Kern National Network, KNN) is a group of seven US medical schools that collaborate to transform medical education. The KNN was established in 2017 as the result of a generous gift from the Kern Family and the Kern Foundation.

Current members of the KNN include the University of California-San Francisco, The Mayo Clinic School of Medicine, the Medical College of Wisconsin School of Medicine, Dartmouth-Geisel School of Medicine, the University of Texas at Austin Medical School, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

The goal of the KNN is to transform medical education nationally and across the continuum from undergraduate medical education to graduate medical education and continuing medical education. The KNN specifically focuses on the three Cs: Character, Competence, and Caring. Competence in this context relates to the development of the skills required to become a physician of the utmost character and one who delivers optimal care to those in our communities.

Collaborative work among its member schools is at the core of the KNN. Work thus far has concentrated on the development of a definition of character as it applies to medical education, a definition for caring, creating psychological safety in the clinical learning environment, a primary palliative care education pilot that aims to increase graduating medical students knowledge and skills around end of life issues, faculty development in medical education, women's leadership, and faculty and learner wellness and well-being. Future projects will involve the transformation of inter-professional education, practical wisdom, empathy, and human-centered design.

Students at the KNN schools have also formed a student collaborative. This group meets multiple times per year and is addressing the role of the three Cs from the student perspective.

The Kern Institute for the Transformation of Medical Education is the Medical College of Wisconsin KNN affiliate. Accomplishments to date include the creation of a monthly Grand Rounds series, a faculty teaching academy focusing on the three Cs, a transformational ideas initiative to inspire and support innovation in medical education, and the creation of a student-lead common read program to foster conversations around character and caring in medicine.

For additional information about the KNN, contact Jose Franco, MD at [jfranco@mcw.edu](mailto:jfranco@mcw.edu)

