

2026 Davee Foundation Lecture and Resident Research Day

Abstract

Nahae Kim, MD, MPH

Northwestern McGaw Family Medicine Residency at Lake Forest

Title: Inbox Management in Primary Care Residency Settings

Purpose: The expanding use of electronic communication in healthcare has increased patient and staff access to clinicians but has also substantially added to administrative workload. The burden of administrative work, erosion of work-life boundaries, and lack of inbox management training are all linked to clinician burnout. Within residency training, inbox management is further complicated by a lack of standardization, variable supervision, and inconsistent integration into clinical workflows. This study aims to explore family medicine residents' experiences with inbox management. Findings will guide targeted, feasible interventions to improve inbox workflows-- the goal being to enhance both patient safety and resident experience.

Methods: Semi-structured individual interviews with residents of the Lake Forest family medicine program were conducted using purposive sampling to capture variation by postgraduate year and recent rotation type. Interviews focused on residents' experiences-- including what aspects of inbox work function well, where residents encounter challenges, and how inbox responsibilities fit into their clinical training and daily workflows. Discussions also explored residents' perspectives on how the residency program could better support inbox management. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and de-identified. Findings will be summarized descriptively and compared across training levels and clinical contexts to identify recurrent issues and high-impact improvement opportunities.

Results & Conclusions: Data collection and analysis are currently in progress. Anticipated results include identification of commonly reported inbox challenges, areas of unclear supervision or responsibility, situations associated with increased after-hours work or perceived safety risk, and resident-suggested workflow or training improvements.