



University of Colorado  
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# Steppingstones: Helping Early Career Pediatric Hospitalists Find Their Footing

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## BACKGROUND

- The AAP emphasizes early career faculty engagement and connection to optimize professional fulfillment<sup>1</sup>
- CU Pediatric Hospital Medicine has grown 145% in 6 years. In Denver, 68% are early career faculty
- Early career support is missing for this large group
- The impact of a career development (CD) curriculum on professional fulfillment, autonomy, and connectivity for early career pediatric hospitalists is unknown

## OBJECTIVE

To assess interest in, and develop, implement, and evaluate a CD curriculum for early career pediatric hospitalists.

## METHODS

- Needs assessment of early career faculty (N=24)
- Develop yearlong, interactive program ("Steppingstones") including 6 seminars + professional portfolio creation
- Evaluate pre/post validated indices measuring fulfillment, autonomy, connectivity

## RESULTS

### Needs Assessment:

- 75% response rate
- 89% felt empowered to pursue career passions. However:
  - 24% were unsure about pursuing academic promotion
  - 46% of those seeking promotion were unsure of their end goal
- CD was the top-rated need (61%) within faculty development, yet:
  - Only 16% felt current offerings were "very good" or "excellent"
- 94% reported interest in participating in a program
  - Creating an up-to-date professional portfolio and clearer career vision as top motivators to join



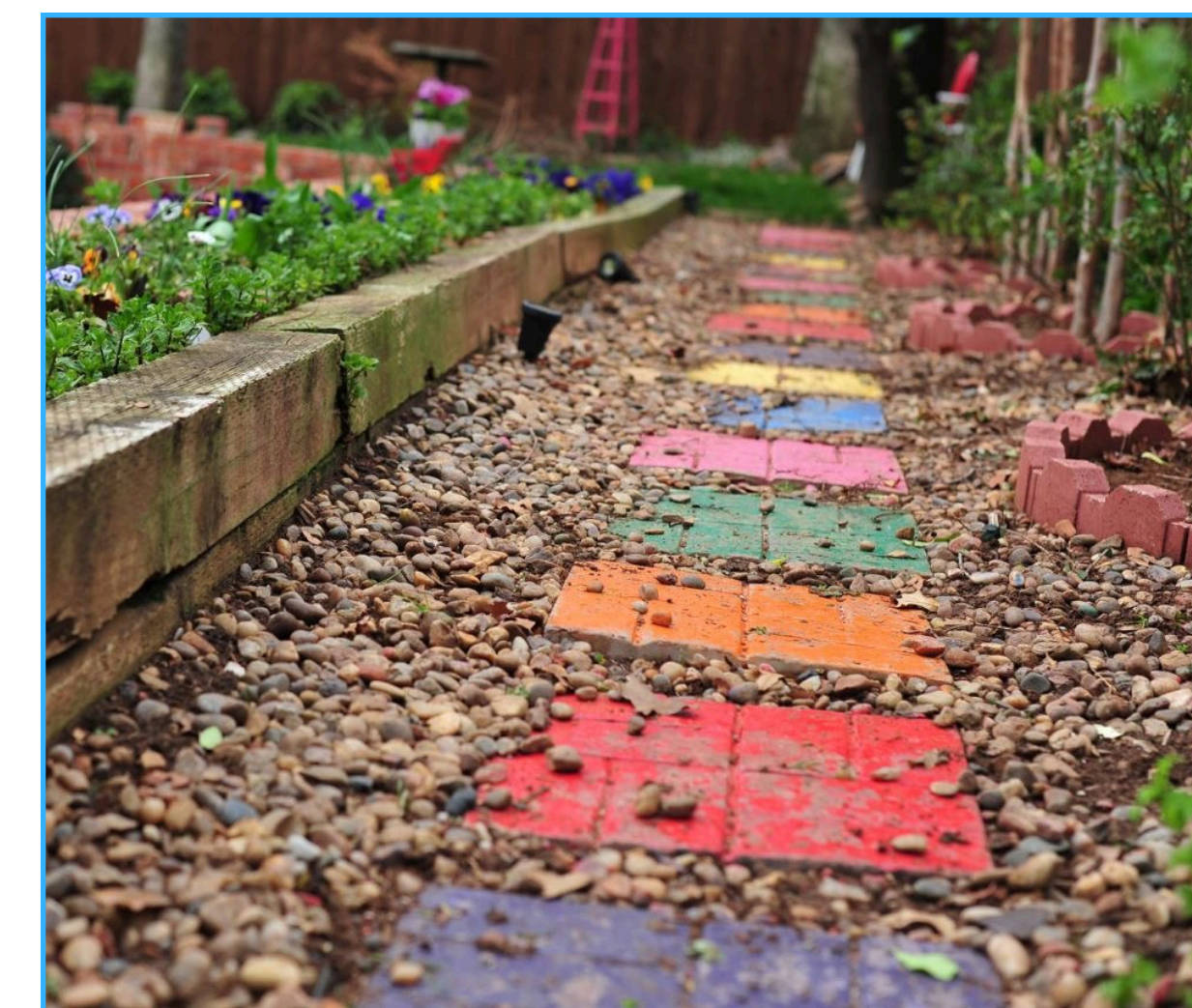
### Seminar Topics

- ✓ Goal Setting & Faculty Ranks
- ✓ Career Development Plans
- ✓ Engagement in Career Goals & Requirements
- Mentorship
- Representing your Work (CVs & Dossiers)
- Networking



### Portfolio Components

- ✓ Goal Setting Worksheet
- ✓ Faculty Rank Alignment Worksheet
- ⌚ Career Development Plan
- ✓ Career Engagement Worksheet
- Mentorship Mosaic
- Mentorship Checklist
- Dossier Portfolio
- Networking Checklist



### Steppingstones Curriculum Implementation:

- 9 early career pediatric hospitalists participating (first cohort Fall 2021)
- Seminar topics selected based on results of needs assessment: "most valuable" and/or "lowest current competency"
- Interactive seminars emphasize self-reflection & small group discussion
- As of March, 3 of 6 seminars & portfolio components completed

**Table 1: Sample Responses to  
"What was the most helpful aspect of this session?"**

"Discussions with other colleagues and Q&A opportunity with [my section head]."

"Dedicated time to craft my own mission and vision statements."

"I enjoyed thinking and writing my career goals. This is a worthwhile endeavor as an academic physician."

"The career development plan portion and breakouts with a peer – loved speaking out loud about my values and goals."

## RESULTS (CONT'D)

### Curriculum Evaluation:

- Each seminar rated "very good" or "good" by all participants (100%)
- Curriculum strengths identified as reflective practice & conversation with colleagues (Table 1)

## CONCLUSIONS

- Career development support is needed among early career pediatric hospitalists
- Steppingstones is a promising means to promote career development among early career pediatric hospitalists
- We will build on early successes as we deliver remaining sessions & recruit 2nd cohort

## FUTURE STEPS

- After curriculum completion, reassess validated indices to assess impact on fulfillment, autonomy, & connectivity
- Apply Steppingstones framework to support early career faculty in other specialties & institutions

References  
1. About SOECP. (n.d.). *American Academy of Pediatrics*. Retrieved February 18, 2022 from <https://www.aap.org/en/community/aap-sections/early-career-physicians/about-soecp/>

2. Image: <https://diygardenstepping01.tumblr.com>