

AMDA Certified Medical Director: 12 Years Later, Chief Medical Officer Reflects on CMD Skills He Uses Daily

Studies Show Quality Scores Raised by 15% in Facilities With Certified Medical Directors

By Marcia Meredith

In 2008, Danny Felty, MD, was accepted into the Certified Medical Director (CMD) Certification program of AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine. Now a chief medical officer with Legacy Care, he reflects on how this program shaped his medical career.

When Danny Felty, MD, took a role as an attending physician in a nursing home in 2007, he had been working as a family medicine physician in private practice for almost a decade.

“My family medicine residency exposed me to post-acute and long-term care, but only briefly,” said Dr. Felty, who is still a practicing family medicine physician and is a medical director of several long-term care facilities in Virginia. He was eager to expand his continuing medical education as he settled into his new role in a skilled nursing environment.

Dr. Felty excelled, and soon he was asked to serve as a medical director. Backed by the encouragement of his administrative partner, he decided to pursue a CMD certification from the American Board of Post-Acute and Long-Term Medicine.

A distinct quality indicator, becoming a CMD demonstrates a practitioner’s commitment to career development and specialized training in PALTC medicine. In fact, a study found that having a certified medical director contributes positively to a nursing home’s quality of care. Data analysis showed that quality scores rose by 15% in facilities that had certified medical directors (J Am Med Dir Assoc 2009;10:431-435).

“It was about this time I attended my first national AMDA conference with thousands

of post-acute care colleagues,” Dr. Felty said. “It was overwhelming and exciting, and helped further launch this journey.”

Dr. Felty soon found that managing a busy medical practice and family life wasn’t a deterrent from committing to the CMD program. At the time, Dr. Felty was seeing up to 25 patients a day. Married with two young sons, he also had a busy home life that included volunteering with several organizations. “Unlike a fellowship, you don’t have to stop your life to complete the training. This fits into your professional life. It’s not a time-based process. It’s self-directed, and you can very easily complete various components of the program to get you going.”

Dr. Felty received his certification in 2009, and he still relies on key principles he learned during the accreditation process. “CMD’s Core Curriculum shows up in my practice every day,” Dr. Felty said. “The curriculum is a primer to becoming a skilled physician and advocate for the aging population.”

The Society’s Core Curriculum focuses on 22 important issues and topics in long-term care, including infection control, residents’ rights, working with families, and more.

“For those physicians in the post-acute care arena, I wholeheartedly recommend obtaining a CMD,” Dr. Felty said. “It’s a user-friendly program, attainable in a reasonable way and provides the best information in this specialty you can find.”

Renowned for his expertise in post-acute care, Dr. Felty was appointed to serve on the governor of Virginia’s COVID-19 Long-Term Care Facility Task Force. He also serves as president of the Society’s Virginia

state chapter. A distinguished graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, Dr. Felty earned his Bachelor of Science degree in biology with a minor in psychology. He then earned a Doctor of Medicine degree from the Medical College of Virginia at Virginia Commonwealth University.



“You don’t have to stop your life to complete the CMD program, and its core curriculum still shows up in my practice every day.”
 Danny Felty, MD

Recently, Dr. Felty’s colleague from Legacy Care, Padmalatha Dharanikota, MD, also received her CMD certification.

To learn more about the CMD, visit www.abplm.org, email cmd@paltc.org, or call (410) 992-3117.

Caring for the Ages is the official newspaper of AMDA - The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine. This publication features relevant news and commentary about clinical developments and the impact of healthcare policy on long-term care medicine.