



Separate Accreditation: To Be or Not To Be

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Section 127 – Rural Track Programs

New CMS definition:

A 'rural track program' is a program, whether separately accredited or not, where residents spend time in both urban and rural settings and the time spent training in a rural place is > 50% of the total training time for residents in the program (or track) as a whole.

For ACGME definition:

Visit Medically Underserved Areas and Population and GME:

<https://www.acgme.org/what-we-do/accreditation/medically-underserved-areas-and-populations/>



What Kind of House?



What Kind of House?

LASTING ESTATE



VACATION HOME





What Kind of Plant?

PLANTING A TREE OR PERENNIAL



PLANTING AN ANNUAL





What Kind of House? - Advantages

SEPARATELY ACCREDITED

- More rigorous development – built for durability
- Less cost in sustaining the program because of indirect benefits
- Potentially more robust local leadership, and easier to justify and ensure administrative costs
- More autonomy for the rural partner
- Easier to track graduates, given the separate ACGME#

NOT SEPARATELY ACCREDITED

- Quicker development
- Less cost in development and implementation
- Less FTE requirements for local leadership
- More control for the urban partner (especially if the sponsoring institution is at the urban site)



What Kind of House? - Disadvantages

SEPARATELY ACCREDITED

- Longer time in development
- More expensive in development and implementation
- Potentially more vulnerable to loss of local leadership (although can relatively easily convert accreditation to 'not separately accredited' status, may lose financial benefits)
- Local leaders may not be ready for faculty and program director roles

NOT SEPARATELY ACCREDITED

- Less durable – easy come, easy go
- More cost in sustaining the program , mostly related to potential lack of continuity in leadership and lower priority from sponsoring institution
- Less rural ownership and investment – requires more constant attention from urban leadership to thrive
- More difficult to track graduates



To Be or Not to Be? – It depends

- Distance between rural and urban sites – Beyond 45-60 minutes travel time argues for separate accreditation
- Rural community assets: financial resources, leadership, community investment and pride – Limited resources argues for not separate accreditation
- Resources for development – Substantial grant funding argues for separate accreditation and building it to last
- Specialty program requirements – The need to do more longitudinal programming to meet the >50% rural training threshold argues for not separate accreditation



To Be or Not to Be? – It depends

- Multiple rural sites, especially at a distance from each other, argues for separate accreditation
- Separate health system – Distributed/shared governance argues for separate accreditation (in most cases)
- The urban site is an 'RRC' – an argument for separate accreditation
- Limited capacity for training – One resident a year argues for not separate accreditation
- Other considerations?



To Be or Not to Be? – It depends

➤ In summary:

1. A question to take very seriously and revisit from time to time over the course of initial design, development, and implementation
2. A question perhaps most germane to the domain of governance, although also important to the domains of finance, accreditation, and community engagement



Comments or Questions?
