



Background

In November 2010, AMSA celebrated the 12th annual National Primary Care Week (NPCW). The 2010 NPCW theme was “The Renaissance of Primary Care and Preventive Medicine” with foci of interest around the following primary care-specific sub-themes: healthcare reform, professional development, community service, preventive medicine, and the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH). The PCMH emerged as a timely issue on the national healthcare stage, and so special attention was paid to NPCW programming development and grant applications that would educate AMSA members about the PCMH. The NPCW evaluation team surveyed NPCW attendees from AMSA chapters around the country in an effort to understand more about AMSA members’ interest in primary care and their level of knowledge of the PCMH.

Methods

Data was collected via anonymous and voluntary survey instruments created on SurveyMonkey.com. There were two surveys—one for participants to complete before their school’s NPCW events, pre-NPCW, and one for participants to complete after their school’s NPCW events, post-NPCW. The pre-NPCW and post-NPCW surveys contained six and ten questions, respectively, with a mix of multiple choice and short-answer questions. Both surveys asked about a few demographics (school/AMSA chapter and year of study), participants’ interest in primary care, their views of their schools’ support for primary care, and their knowledge of the PCMH. Questions on participants’ interest in primary care, their school’s support for primary care, and their knowledge of the PCMH were presented in the form of a rating scale; a score of one indicated the lowest level of interest or knowledge, while a score of five indicated the highest level of interest or knowledge. The pre-NPCW survey also included questions about what participants expected to learn from NPCW. The post-NPCW survey asked whether participants had been involved in any community service activities during NPCW and whether they felt NPCW had made an impact at their school. The survey was intended to take no more than five minutes to complete and to allow participation via completion of one or both surveys.

All AMSA members invited to participate in the pre-NPCW and post-NPCW surveys. Participants were recruited in several ways: via posts to the AMSA NPCW webpage, via an email message to all AMSA members at the beginning of NPCW, and through requests sent to chapter leaders through AMSA’s Inspirational Exchange website. Additionally, the leaders at the AMSA chapters that received NPCW grant funds were required to encourage their members to complete both pre-NPCW and post-NPCW surveys.

Data analysis was conducted using Survey Monkey and Microsoft Excel programs.

Figure 1.

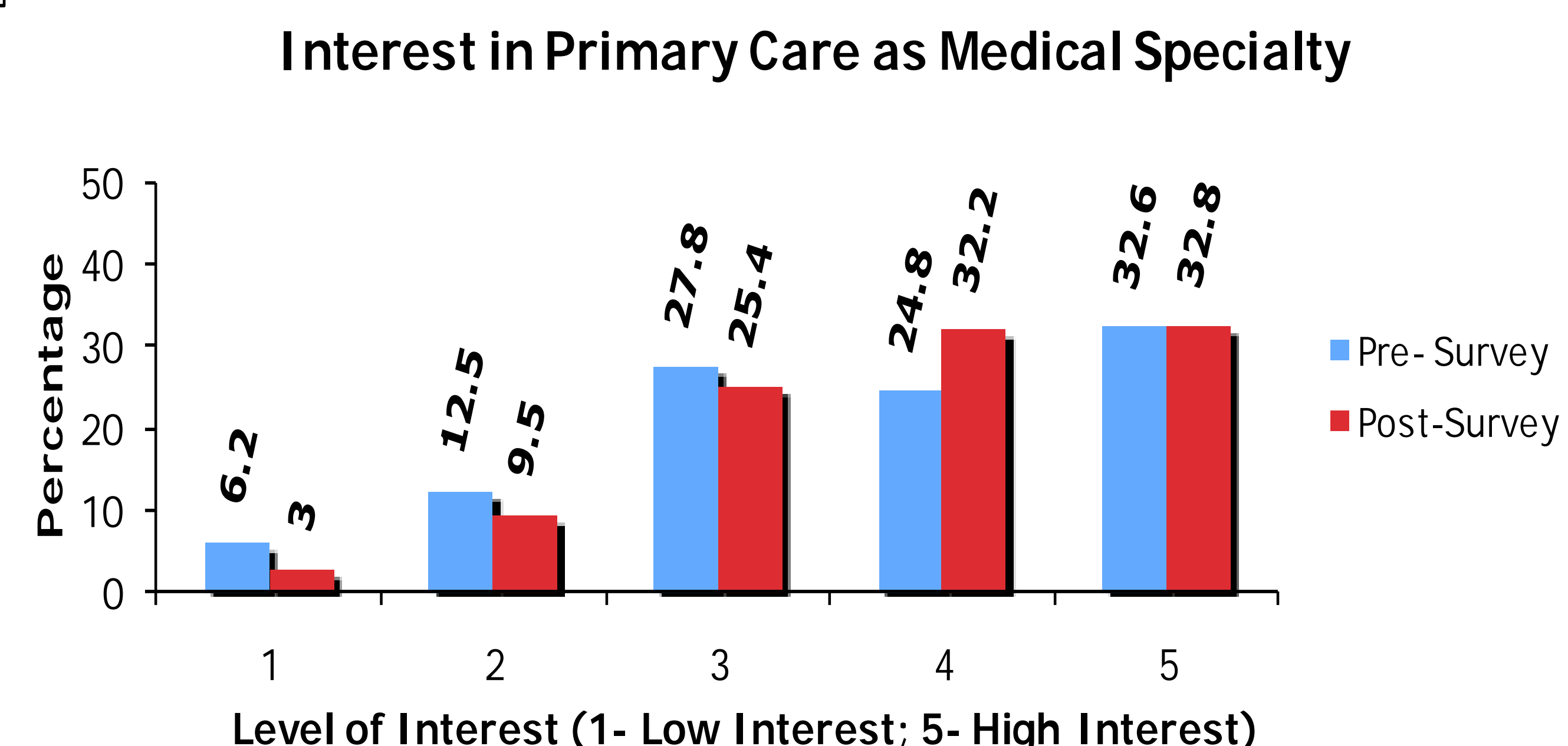


Figure 2.

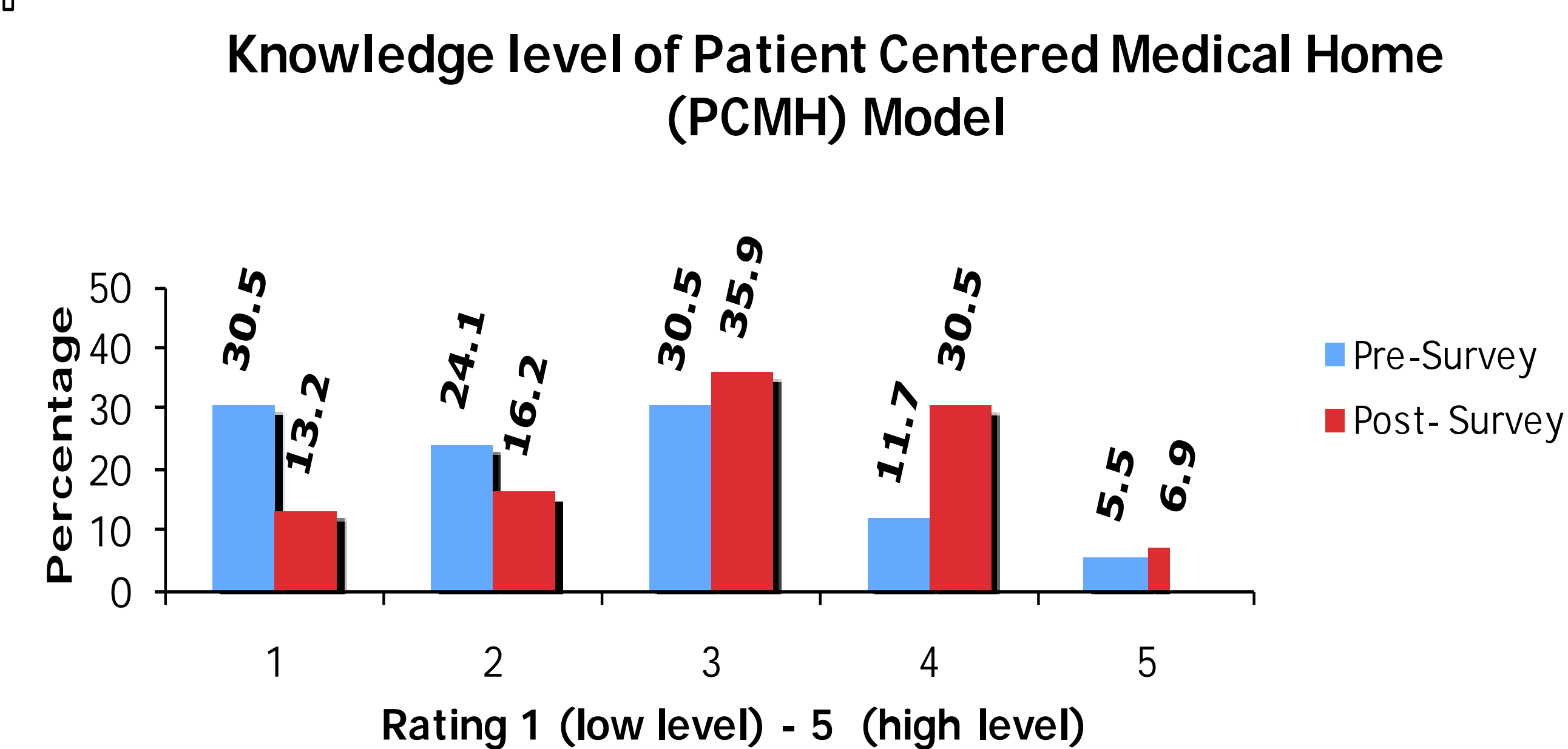


Table 1. AMSA chapters (regions) represented.

- Boston University School of Medicine (1)
- Ponce School of Medicine and Health Sciences (2)
- Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education (2)
- New York Medical College (2)
- State University of New York-Downstate (2)
- Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (3)
- Michigan State University College of Human Medicine (4)
- University of Illinois at Chicago School of Medicine (4)
- University of North Carolina School of Medicine (5)
- Florida State University College of Medicine (5)
- University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center (7)
- Texas A & M University-College Station (7)
- Meharry Medical College (7)
- Tulane University School of Medicine (7)
- A.T. Still University Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (8)
- University of North Texas Health Science Center- Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (9)
- University of Arizona College of Medicine (10)
- Touro University Nevada College of Osteopathic Medicine (10)
- Oregon Health & Science University (10)
- University of Hawaii (10)
- University of California-Irvine School of Medicine (10)
- Ross University School of Medicine (International)

Results

Four hundred forty individuals completed the pre-NPCW survey and 345 completed the post-NPCW survey. A vast majority of respondents were first and second-year medical students (pre-NPCW: 48% first-years, 46% second-years; post-NPCW: 46% first-years, 47% second-years). Survey respondents represented nineteen schools from nine AMSA regions (Table 1). It is assumed that all survey respondents participated in at least one AMSA NPCW event at their respective schools. However, the post-NPCW survey indicated that only 60% of respondents were involved in NPCW community service activities. Additionally, 90% of respondents felt that their AMSA chapters had done an adequate job of advertising NPCW at their schools.

Pre-NPCW and Post-NPCW respondent comparisons indicated that more students were more seriously interest interested in pursuing a primary care career and that fewer students were not interested in primary care after participating in their AMSA chapter’s NPCW events. Fifty seven percent of pre-NPCW survey respondents rated their interest in primary care as four or five out of five, while 65% of post-NPCW survey respondents rated their interest in primary care in the same two upper quintiles. While 19% of students rated their interest in primary care as low, a one or a two, in the pre-NPCW survey, only 13% rated their interest in primary care as low in the post-NPCW survey. (Figure 1.)

After NPCW, students also felt more knowledgeable about the PCMH. Seventeen percent of pre-NPCW survey respondents rated their knowledge of PCMH at four or five, while 37% of post-NPCW respondents rated their knowledge as such. Respondents also provided a number of suggestions for improving primary care education in premedical and medical school curricula. (Figure 2.)

Conclusion

While this assessment of pre-NPCW and post-NPCW surveys is not without its limits, it appears that NPCW 2010 was a moderate success. There was a 20% increase in respondents’ knowledge of PCMH, 8% increase in interest in a career in primary care, and 6% decrease in non-interest in primary care. Further, the number of AMSA members interested in primary care remains high—a trend which reflects positively on AMSA efforts to increase awareness of primary care and preventive medicine. The results of these surveys also indicate areas for improvement in NPCW efforts in the realms of community engagement, education, and health policy.

Acknowledgements

AMSA’s National Primary Care Week is funded by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.