

Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award



The Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award honors program directors who find innovative ways to teach residents and fellows, and to provide quality health care while remaining connected to the initial impulse to care for others in this environment. Parker J. Palmer is the author of the book *The Courage to Teach*; his promotion of the concept of “living divided no more” has proven relevant to teaching in academic health centers.



Alec B. O'Connor, MD, MPH

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Nominators had this to say:

“As we advance through residency, Dr. O’Connor’s (AOC, as we call him) devotion to education is evident. He strives to prioritize learning over service for all residents. Notably, he advocates for an eight-patient cap for interns, though the ACGME allows ten, to balance quality learning with quantity of patients. When the hospital was strained, seeing record numbers during the pandemic, he maintained this balance. When a third wave of COVID-19 approached, he developed a multi-divisional plan, utilizing fellows over residents for further COVID-19 coverage, protecting our time-limited education. His unwavering advocacy for residents paired with creativity and resourcefulness contributes to his outstanding leadership.”

“Alec pioneered a highly successful 6+2 ambulatory block model when such models were rare. He established a robust program that ensures all residents have meaningful participation in patient safety and QI initiatives. With his support, residents have addressed geriatric fracture care, food insecurity, health literacy, cancer screening, and patients’ religious and spiritual needs. He supported development of residency pathways, including medical education, point of care ultrasound, and health advocacy. He created rural rotations to broaden residents’ experience and career perspectives. He was foundational in developing a procedure team, one of the few national models where APPs teach and supervise residents.”