STARS PROGRAM · MS4 IMPACT SURVEY · CLASS OF 2026

What graduating students say about STARS...

STARS
Students & Trainees Advocating for Resource Stewardship

40
graduates responded
92% gave complete responses

31
applied to residency
and completed the survey

15
different specialties matched
no single one dominates

1 Engagement was sustained, not superficial...

83% described themselves as moderately or extremely involved in STARS
25 of 30 respondents

97% stayed engaged with STARS for a year or longer
29 of 30 respondents · half for 2+ years

2 STARS showed up in the residency application...

90% named STARS somewhere in their ERAS application
28 of 31 applicants

77% talked about STARS in residency interviews
24 of 31 applicants

87% felt STARS set them apart from their peers
26 of 30 respondents

16 listed STARS both on their CV and among their 10 ERAS experiences; 70% said it contributed to their match

3 Leadership and scholarly output followed...

87% credited STARS with launching career-advancing leadership activities
26 of 30 respondents

73% credited STARS with impact on abstracts, publications, or presentations
22 of 30 respondents

Every respondent plans to carry high-value care forward...

100% will incorporate high-value care into residency

30/30 expect STARS to shape their clinical practice

97% will continue scholarly or QI work in the field

Bottom line: STARS is translating directly into residency applications and interview conversations, and graduates broadly credit the program with shaping their leadership development, scholarly output, and — most consistently — their intent to carry high-value care into residency and beyond.

Approx. 110 eligible MS4 students surveyed anonymously in Spring 2026. Denominators vary by question: 31 respondents applied to residency; 30 answered the program-impact items.
stars.costsofcare.org

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"Helped me get involved in high value care research"

"It was really insightful in changing how I want to practice medicine"

"Allowed me to talk passionately about my interest in high-value care and its relevance in my intended specialty"

"...leadership experience exposing me to the realities of the cost of medicine in the US"

"STARS helped me create my own project from start to finish - starting with IRB to presenting a poster at a conference. It also taught me key VBC principles that I was able to share with peers"

"Was a meaningful experience where I was able to be a leader and create a new initiative that was shared in schools across the nation. This was a great experience, talking point, and demonstration of leadership to programs"

"Leading a high value care project was one of my "key experiences" listed on my application, so it was certainly read and taken into account"

"It certainly helped me have meaningful patient interactions that then helped me in reflection for my application and on interviews. Having the support of STARS leaders and faculty helped me gain other opportunities that also contributed directly to my application."

"Mentorship and career development guidance - STARS connected me with mentors who provided invaluable guidance on research, career planning, and the residency application process. Through these relationships, I received feedback on my scholarly work, personal statement, and overall career trajectory, helping me build a stronger and more focused application for internal medicine.

Opportunities for meaningful scholarly and leadership experiences - STARS provided opportunities to engage in research, quality improvement, and patient-centered initiatives that strengthened my academic portfolio and helped me develop as a physician-leader. These experiences allowed me to demonstrate a commitment to improving patient care, contribute to scholarly work, and gain skills that I was able to discuss during residency interviews."

"...brought up in multiple interviews, and projects that I want to build upon from my times in STARS were talked about at length"

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