Making the “right” decision can be incredibly complex, especially when it comes to making decisions about health care. Whether it is policy makers deciding how to allocate scarce resources, provider and stakeholder groups developing treatment guidelines, or patients/caregivers making decisions about treatment options for themselves or a loved one, making the right decision can have life and death consequences.

The Society for Medical Decision Making (SMDM) is the international academic society for stakeholders engaged in and impacted by medical decision making. We are the center for developing, testing, refining and teaching the principles and tools that improve individual, clinical, and policy level decision making in healthcare. Founded by researchers who started applying decision analytic techniques to the field of medicine in the 1960’s and 1970’s, our members come from a wide variety of backgrounds and academic disciplines, with about 1,000 members from more than 40 countries.
Areas of growth in the field of medical decision making align with SMDM’s expertise.

Patient Engagement
Involving patients in medical research is critical to improving science, whether the topic is:
- shared decision making (what role do patients want to play in decision making, what information do they need/want, what are their values and preferences related to the decision).
- comparative effectiveness research (e.g., what factors are most important to patients)
- drug development (e.g., what side effects can be tolerated, what are people willing to pay for the drugs, what benefits are expected)

Our science is improved, and better reflects patients’ needs when patients are involved in study design, implementation, and dissemination. Many of our members have significant expertise in incorporating patients into research and we have begun to translate that information to a variety of national and international organizations (e.g., FDA, VA, universities in Asia). SMDM is well positioned to be a leader in the field of patient engagement.

Clinical and Stakeholder Partnerships
Clinical, stakeholder and government-based decision makers acknowledge that improving clinical care, guideline development, and health policy requires advanced decision making tools and techniques. The board believes that SMDM can build on its experience partnering with these groups to develop joint projects, courses and events around our shared goals. We understand that effective partnerships must be active, ongoing, and collaborative.

International Impact
Globally, there is a renewed emphasis on optimal decision making in clinical and policy settings. SMDM sees a large, unmet demand from universities and clinical organizations throughout the world to teach our principles and tools to researchers, clinicians and policy makers. The board believes that increasing its activities in regions outside of North America is essential to furthering the science of the field, to improving the quality of medical decisions in practice, and to building our membership and meeting attendance from outside of North America.

1,000 members from more than 40 countries
While committed to maintaining the strength of our North American and European meetings, the rigor and impact of our two journals, and the stability of our financial position, we see opportunity for advancing the field of medical decision making in the following ways:

**Advance the field of patient engagement**
- Increase partnerships with clinicians through links with other societies and organizations interested in patient engagement
- Develop and promote evidence-based trainings in patient engagement for our members and for others interested in building this expertise
- Incorporate patients into SMDM meetings, into meeting planning, and into our journal review process
- Establish a patient advisory group to serve as a resource for members and to evaluate us annually on bringing the patient perspective into our work.

**Strengthen our relationships with clinical and health decision making organizations**
- Expand and promote our resources for clinical societies
- Increase our visibility among groups making health policy decisions
- Increase the presence of clinical and policy making decision makers at SMDM

**Increase our engagement and influence outside of North America**
- Continue to engage researchers, decision makers and stakeholder organizations internationally
- Promote and encourage leadership from members outside of North America
- Be in a position to respond to requests for trainings from Low- and Middle-Income Countries
- Explore ways to provide trainings outside of our traditional meeting structure

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**Overarching Goals**

1. Improve and expand relationships with partners working toward similar goals
2. Develop and implement trainings on additional topics and for new audiences
3. Position ourselves as a resource to others
4. Enhance visibility of our products and services
5. Develop engagement and leadership opportunities for new audiences
## STRATEGY 1: Involving Patients

Be a resource for researchers, clinicians and policy makers interested in engaging patients in the medical decision-making research and implementation processes.

**ACTIVITIES/EXAMPLES**
- Create a community resource advisory board within SMDM
- Incorporate patients and patient engagement trainings into our meetings and into our meeting planning

**OUTCOMES**
- SMDM becomes a knowledge leader in effective patient engagement
- Research conducted by SMDM members becomes more informed with the patient perspective
- There is a cadre of patients trained in reviewing medical decision-making manuscripts

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## STRATEGY 2: Building Capacity

Build the capacity of clinicians and policy makers to conduct, use and benefit from methodologically rigorous, evidence-based research

**ACTIVITIES/EXAMPLES**
- Work with partner societies to identify gaps in evidence-based knowledge and seek ways to fill those gaps
- Package and promote our training programs to other societies and institutions throughout the world
- Expand our core curriculum to include new topics of interest to a wide range of decision makers

**OUTCOMES**
- Enhanced knowledge of evidence-based, methodologically rigorous decision-making tools among clinical and policy-oriented societies
- SMDM programming becomes more diverse and informed by the users of our work
- Membership and meeting attendance among clinicians and policy makers increases
- SMDM becomes a trusted resource for other clinical and policy-oriented societies

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## STRATEGY 3: Developing Leaders

Optimize our services and support for trainees in the field of medical decision making.

**ACTIVITIES/EXAMPLES**
- Design the next iteration of the SMDM Fellowship program
- Continue to develop and provide meaningful activities and programming for trainee members and for trainees at the annual meeting
- Continue to support our more senior members as they provide mentorship to the next generation of researchers

**OUTCOMES**
- SMDM nurtures and supports the next generation of medical decision makers
- Early career researchers can meet with and be mentored by leaders in the field in a comfortable and supportive environment
- Researchers have access to a broad array of career trajectories and opportunities

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STRATEGY 4: Enhancing Partnerships

Enhance existing partnerships and explore new opportunities with societies throughout the world working toward common goals. Identify and pursue opportunities for collaborations, resource development and joint trainings.

**ACTIVITIES/EXAMPLES**
- Optimize our “Ambassador” program to expand our relationships with other societies through crossover members
- Identify key organizations and initiate conversations with potential new partners
- Expand our current opportunities for joint trainings and programming
- Ease barriers to meeting attendance for representatives from other societies

**OUTCOMES**
- Improved communication between evidence-based researchers and members of other societies with similar goals
- Jointly planned and branded courses/sessions at SMDM meetings and at partner meetings
- Increased membership and meeting attendance from our partner societies

STRATEGY 5: Engaging International Audiences

Ensure our current programming continues to engage members and others outside of North America. Build on our strategy to engage with researchers, clinicians and policy makers in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC).

**ACTIVITIES/EXAMPLES**
- Package and promote our existing online educational products
- Explore the possibility of developing additional distance learning opportunities and/or making our current programming available in other languages
- Build the capacity of SMDM to respond to opportunities for trainings and joint programming with partners outside of North America
- Explore the possibility of creating chapters/trainee chapters in LMIC
- Ensure SMDM continues to provide deeply discounted membership and meeting attendance to researchers in LMIC

**OUTCOMES**
- Researchers and clinicians in LMIC find a home with others of similar interests
- Researchers and decision makers in LMIC become more informed by and connected to leaders in the field of medical decision making
- SMDM programming is delivered to and becomes more informed by the needs of LMIC
- Membership and meeting attendance becomes more diverse