My research interests in medical education are focused on the CanMEDS Health Advocate role. The Health Advocate role requires physicians to identify the determinants of health affecting patients, to contribute to the improved health of communities, and to recognize appropriate opportunities to advocate. The accommodation of Health Advocate activity into training, assessment, and conceptions of daily practice has been controversial and confusing. My work, with Glenn Regehr and Stephane Voyer, has been to rethink how the Health Advocate role is presented within the CanMEDS framework. We suggest that the confusion might be a result of subsuming two distinct activities under the rubric of health advocacy, activities we call agency and activism. We suggest that distinguishing between agency and activism within health advocacy will bring more clarity to the conversation about what we are asking of physicians as health advocates. This work was presented at CCME 2011 and is being published in the September 2012 issue of Academic Medicine. As a next step in this area of research, our team (including Stephane Voyer, Maria Hubinette, Heather Frost, and Glenn Regehr) has been awarded a grant from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada to characterize ‘everyday activism’ and what it looks like for physicians in practice.

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