The purpose of the Picker Institute Challenge Grant Program, which was launched in 2005, is to provide support, through a program of annual grants, for research and development of innovative projects designed to integrate successful patient-centered care initiatives and best practices into the education of our country’s future practicing physicians. The Gold Foundation joined the program for the 2009–2010 grant cycle and funding has increased from four to ten grants annually.

**Program Cycle 2009-2010**

“Train Pediatric Residents in the Delivery of News and the Discussion of Issues Related to Death and Dying in a Pediatric Population”
Principal investigator: Heather Huszti, PhD, Director of Training, Psychology Childrens Hospital of Orange County, Calif.

This project is an educational program focused on improving patient-centered communication skills of second- and third-year residents with a specific focus on the delivery of difficult news and the discussion of palliative care issues in a pediatric population. Fellows-in-training subspecializing in hematology-oncology and critical care will also be included. The project’s patient-centered aims are consistent with the patient-centered care principle of Information, Communication and Education. The project will include participation of patients/parents in the curriculum design and educational sessions. Current patients/parents will be asked to evaluate the communication skills of residents participating in the program. Inclusion of parents in the development and implementation of the curriculum will provide a greater patient-centered perspective to the provision of difficult communication. Curriculum and outcomes will be presented at a Medical Residency Training Directors’ meeting. Materials can be distributed through the meeting and the Picker Institute Web site. An article describing the program and its outcomes will be written.

“Communication in Family Meetings: Developing and Assessing a Curriculum for Residents”
Principal investigator: Julie T. Irish, PhD, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, Mass.

Project goals are to develop a medical education research agenda to investigate optimal educational strategies to enhance physician-family and interprofessional communication behaviors and to correlate them with outcomes of interest. The more immediate goals of the project are: 1) to develop an innovative curriculum to enhance
residents’ communication skills and interactions during family meetings; and 2) to assess the impact of the curriculum through family members’ satisfaction with family meetings. The specific objectives of the project are: 1) to deliver the communication curriculum to second-year internal medicine residents; 2) to demonstrate that the residents have acquired proficient communication skills using a rating instrument based on the Kalamazoo Essentials of Communication; and 3) to assess and demonstrate improvement in family members’ satisfaction with family meetings. Project successes will be shared with other Harvard-affiliated teaching hospitals as well as the larger GME community, through either the ACGME or other accrediting organizations so that they too will have the tools to teach these much-needed skills. This curriculum will likely be of interest to other residency programs as it aligns with several of the ACGME competencies. Results will be published in peer-review journals.

“Improving Patient Communication Skills among Surgical Residents”
Principal investigator: Rajiv Y. Chandawarkar, MD, University of Connecticut Health Center

The goal of this project is to teach surgical residents to incorporate communication skills that focus on patient-centeredness. Surgical and non-surgical residency programs will benefit by helping residents incorporate patient needs and opinions into the care team’s decision-making process. Clear and empathic communication builds stronger relationships between physicians and patients. The need for preparing surgical residents to communicate effectively is high. Mostly, surgical residents are not formally taught patient-communication and are expected to acquire these skills “on the job.” Results from this study are important for implementation of the educational tools in surgical and non-surgical residency programs. Dissemination will be achieved in two ways: intra-institutional implementation, within UConn and Yale; and inter-institutional implementation, via presentation at national meetings and publication.

“Develop Health Care Transitions, a Resident Learning Module on Building Bridges”
Principal investigator: Suzanne McLaughlin, MD, Alpert School of Medicine, Brown University, Rhode Island and Hasbro Hospitals

The goal of this project is to develop a transition curriculum for medical residents that will enhance residents’ knowledge base of transition issues; develop clinical skills to assess, plan and support transition for adolescent and young adult patients; and promote residents’ self-efficacy in the integration of patients and families in the decision-making process through close mentoring of the transition process by faculty and patients who have experienced challenges and success in transition. Dissemination will include peer-reviewed medical education journals and posting to national residency program curriculum Web sites. Ongoing work will include the development of
ambulatory residency curriculum modules and presentation of curriculum workshops at national meetings.

“Teaching Family-Centeredness in the PICU: A Novel Approach Using Medical Simulations”
Principal investigator: David A. Turner, MD, Duke Children's Hospital

The focus of the project is to implement a mock code training program in the PICU to provide multidisciplinary training in crisis-resource management. An important component of this program will be to teach strategies that integrate families into these difficult acute-care situations. With regard to the Picker Institute’s principles of patient-centered care, this proposal will primarily address the involvement of family and friends but will also include the principles of respect for patients’ values, preferences and expressed needs, and information, communication and education. While this curriculum will be focused initially on the PICU, it will be easily generalized to other clinical care areas. We plan to collaborate with other programs in our institution to supplement their educational curricula and bolster the teaching of family-centeredness at Duke. Ultimately, we hope to supplement a number of educational curricula throughout Duke and create a truly integrated simulation-enhanced curriculum that we will publish and present on a national stage as a model for educational innovation in the area of family-centered care.

“Introduce a Family-Centered Care Curriculum to a Pediatric Residency Program and Measure Its Effects on the Centeredness of Pediatric Residents”
Principal investigator: Keith J. Mann, Md., Children’s Mercy Hospital

The goal of this project is to develop a curriculum that teaches pediatric residents the knowledge, skills and behaviors of patient- and family-centered care (PFCC) and measures the outcomes of physician “centeredness” and family satisfaction. Evidence regarding effective approaches to physician education on PFCC and the impact on patients and families is needed. The CMHC Family Advisory Board (FAB), pediatric residents and medical education leadership collaborated to create a PFCC curriculum. Program goals and objectives address four of the Picker Institute’s core principles, including: (1) respect for patients’ values, preferences and expressed needs; (2) information, communication and integration; (3) emotional support; and (4) involvement of family and friends. Other principles will be indirectly addressed throughout the curriculum. The curriculum will be repeated for each class of residents, creating a culture of PFCC within the residency program. The culminating half-day retreat will be taped and/or telecast for dissemination. We plan to publish our results and share our curriculum.
“Transitioning from Pediatric- to Adult-Centered Medical Care (The Patients’ Perspective)”
Principal investigator: Niraj Sharma, MD, MPH, Brigham and Women's and Boston Children's Hospitals, Harvard Medical School

The goal of the project is to develop a curriculum for medical residents on the transition of children with chronic illnesses to adult-centered care. This project will utilize videotaped interviews with patients and their families so that residents will learn directly from the patient’s point of view. This curriculum will specifically address several Picker Institute principles: the families will be asked to discuss issues related to access to care; coordination and integration of health care; sharing information between families and providers; communication and education; involvement of family and friends; and transition and continuity. The curriculum will be designed to teach these same components to residents. The initial study will be conducted at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Children’s Hospital, Boston. After the first session is completed, results will be presented as a workshop at a national program directors association meeting (e.g., Association of Program Directors in Internal Medicine) to demonstrate its effectiveness. The long-term goal is to develop the curriculum both on DVD and online so it can be easily accessed nationally by medical students and faculty practitioners as well as by residents at other programs.

“Design a Communications Program that Can Be Shared with the General Public Population of Oakland County, Educating Them on Their Responsibilities and the Roles They Play in Patient Healthcare”
Principal investigator: Jill Stefaniak, William Beaumont Hospital

This proposal will combine the training concepts of Web-based training with a unique simulation process known as in-situ simulation to allow patients the opportunity to learn and practice critical conversations skills with their healthcare team around the critical issue of healthcare hand washing. It will focus on the core principle “Coordination and integration of care” from the Picker Institute. Patient workshops will be designed by our professionals at William Beaumont Hospital to educate the general public on communication. A Web-based training median will provide the opportunity to reach a greater audience that, coupled with patient workshops at William Beaumont Hospital, will provide the general public with the necessary tools to become more participative in their healthcare plan. This serves as a platform for future educational programs that can provide the missing link between the role of patients and their healthcare team while further facilitating a more cohesive decision-making process.
“Screening and Managing Interpersonal Violence During Pregnancy at an Urban Teaching Hospital”
Principal investigator: Dr. Suneet Chauhan, Aurora Health Care Inc.

Through this project, residents will be trained to consistently screen pregnant patients for IPV (intimate partner violence) and, if it is present, refer them to violence intervention centers and other support networks. Since the majority of patients are not victims of verbal or physical abuse, the challenge is to sensitively and effectively identify those who are. IPV screening takes skill and persistence on the part of the healthcare provider, as it may take as many as six interactions with a healthcare provider for an abused woman to disclose the violence. This project will help residents improve their skills and tune in to their patients. At the completion of the study, results will be shared with the house staff, labor and delivery nurses, midwives and faculty at the teaching hospital. Results will also be shared with the nine other hospitals within Aurora Health Care providing obstetrical services. Findings will be presented at the next year’s American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), May 15–19, 2010, in San Francisco, Calif., to enable other OBGYN residency program directors to implement similar curricula. Lastly, the results of the study will be published in a peer-reviewed journal such as the American Journal of Perinatology.

“Create a Patient-Centered Care Plan (PCCP) within an Electronic Medical Record; and Evaluate the Impact of PCCP Use on Patients and Healthcare Team Members”
Principal investigators: Judith Pauwels, MD, Program Director, and Larry Mauksch, MEd, Univ of Washington Family Medicine Residency

The project will focus on the following Picker Institute principles of patient-centered care: respect for patients’ values, preferences and expressed needs; coordination and integration of care; and information, communication and education. These principles will be addressed through the formation of a new EHR section called the Patient-Centered Care Plan (PCCP). This project’s goal is to use the PCCP to restructure our current model of care to foster patient-centered care. This work will be distributed through local, regional, and national presentations and through submission to academic and primary care journals.