

David C. Leach Award



Named to honor the ACGME's former Executive Director, Dr. David C. Leach (1997-2007), and his commitment to resident education and physician well-being, this award recognizes resident/fellow-led projects and innovations.



Guenola Hunt, MD, LT MC USN

Team members: Team Members: Melanie Wiseman, MD; Jeffery Gray, MD; Paul Happel, MD; Kimberly Fabyan, MD; Brian Neubauer, MD; Erika Walker, MD; Adam Barelski, MD; Andrew Wieher, RN-BSN; Alainna Crotty, MSN, APRN, AGCNS-BC, NE-BC
Internal Medicine
National Capital Consortium
Bethesda, Maryland

About the Project:

“Accountable care units refer to geographically cohorted internal medicine teams with embedded interdisciplinary support to improve communication among team members. According to the Joint Commission, lapses in communication are identified as root causes of well over half of reported sentinel events (1). The implementation of geographically cohorted internal medicine teams has been shown to improve physician-nurse communication on essential patient-care issues including expected discharge date and plan of care discussions (2). Additionally, interdisciplinary huddles have been shown to decrease the rate of adverse safety events (3). The goal of this project was to transition internal medicine admissions at our hospital to this proven model.

“Dr. Hunt’s vision was to assign each of the four internal medicine teams to one geographic unit. Within this unit, there would be embedded allied health workers including social workers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and pharmacists, all working as one team to provide the highest quality patient care. Additionally, these teams would build longitudinal relationships with the nursing staff of their respective units, improving trust and communication. Lastly, there would be a daily multidisciplinary huddle that brought all of the aforementioned members of the multidisciplinary team together, improving communication and giving all parties a better understanding of the plan of care for each patient.

“The plan modified the admissions system that was already in place. This plan was delivered to the hospital’s Patient Flow Committee, which is made up of hospital leadership from the Departments of Medicine, Surgery, and Nursing and focuses on improving systems that affect that flow of patients from admission through discharge. With buy-in from some of the hospital leaders who sit on this committee, a larger team was created that included nursing leaders. Dr. Hunt and other members of the team discussed the project at multiple hospital committees including the Executive Committee of Medical Services (ECOMS) and the Executive Committee of Nursing Services (ECONS). This allowed senior hospital leaders to inquire about the project and what it would entail.”