Faculty Inpatient Service

Texas Children's Hospital
Baylor College of Medicine
Houston, Texas

Start Up

June 2000

Employment Arrangement

Faculty appointments and employment are with Baylor College of Medicine Department of Pediatric, Section of Pediatric Emergency Medicine (PEM).

History/Organization

The Faculty Inpatient Service (FIS) was created by the Section of Pediatric Emergency Medicine in order to answer a need for inpatient attending coverage for hospitalized patients. Initially, FIS provided coverage for 25 community physicians and approximately one-third of admitted patients who had no identified primary care provider, or a physician who did not have admitting privileges. Within a short time, however, FIS grew rapidly to meet the needs of community physicians who were increasingly busy at the office and were not able to come to the hospital for rounds, in addition to accounting for the growing numbers of patients without a medical home.

Currently, FIS provides coverage for over 200 community physicians with more on the waiting list and cares for two thirds of all unassigned patients admitted. FIS offers two lines of service: traditional resident-based care and non-resident based patient care (up to 24 beds). The non-resident based care system was developed in response to the increasing number of patients held overnight in the Texas Children's Emergency Center for inpatient rooms. Care in this unit is provided solely by FIS during the day with night coverage provided by the urgent care general pediatricians working in the Texas Children's Emergency Center. In addition, FIS is available for pediatric consults for all other services.

All hospitalists are part of the faculty in the Section of Pediatric Emergency Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine. The medical director of the FIS is also the director of the Texas Children's Emergency Center as well as the head of the PEM at Baylor College of Medicine. Because of this relationship, the FIS has the full support, both financial and administrative, from the section and its members. The current growth and expansion of the service could not have been achieved without it.

Scheduling

There are four full-time hospitalists on the FIS throughout the year. Two faculty members are exclusively dedicated to the hospitalist service all year round, while the other two come from a core
group of urgent care general pediatricians with an interest in hospitalist medicine. There are four hospitalists on the weekday and three on the weekends.

Residents provide all cross coverage at night with beeper backup by the FIS, except for the non-resident service. The in-house urgent care physician at Texas Children's Emergency Center provides this coverage in addition to all admissions calls after 10 pm.

Census

The Faculty Inpatient Service sees over 3000 patients a year. Each hospitalist averages between 8 to 12 patients a day during the spring/summer and 10 to 16 patients during the fall/winter months. Our daily census averages between 40-60 patients a day, which comprises up to half of patients admitted to the general pediatric service at Texas Children's. New admissions vary between 10 to 20 patients in a 24-hour period.

Communication Strategies

Communication with the community physicians has been critical to the success of the FIS and is accomplished in a number of ways. The Texas Children's Emergency Center calls all community primary medical doctors (PMD) after evaluation of their patient and once the decision is made to admit the patient. The hospitalist then contacts the PMD during the hospitalization and at the time of discharge. A handwritten discharge summary is completed and faxed to the referring physician. Another is given to the parents for their own records. For hospitalizations greater than two calendar days, a dictated discharge summary is also sent to the referring physician.

Educational/Hospital Roles

Although there continues to be a traditional subspecialty teaching attending on each unit at Texas Children's, FIS has been rapidly integrated into the education of the residents and medical students. Scheduled teaching sessions as well as individual supervision for care of patients admitted to the FIS is provided at all times. Because of our continuous presence, the FIS has additionally become the resource of choice for residents and medical students for any problems or concern for all patients on the unit, regardless of the admitting service.

In addition to teaching medical students and pediatric residents at Texas Children's, some of the faculty participates in the traditional inpatient service at Ben Taub General Hospital. Effective July 2004, the inpatient component of the pediatric core rotation for the medical students at Texas Children's will dramatically be revised with the FIS faculty playing an even greater role in their education.

Within a short period of time, the administration at Texas Children's has recognized the importance of the FIS by requesting their faculty presence in many hospital committees as well as consultative and leadership roles in many projects relevant to the care of hospitalized patients. Besides the goals of providing excellent patient care and teaching services, FIS hopes to be involved at the administrative level to enhance patient outcomes and meet patient safety targets.
Future Plans

Development and expansion of the FIS was the focus for the group in the initial year. With the firm establishment of the service, emphasis has shifted to enhancement and improvement of delivery of care with a focus on development of best practice guidelines and clinical research projects. Additionally, participation in hospital wide initiatives for quality improvement will continue. However, the education of medical students and residents will continue to be an utmost focus for the group.

The future of FIS looks incredibly bright and we hope to be positioned to be one of the leaders in the Pediatric Hospitalist movement for many years.