### Background

Traditional 1-month training blocks may fail to provide sufficient exposure to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes residents need for practice and are not conducive to mentoring relationships with faculty.

### Objectives

- To create individualized career-focused experiences in the third year to prepare residents for careers in primary care, hospitalist medicine or subspecialty fellowship.
- To use meaningful individualized learning goals to guide the structure of the experience.

### Program Descriptions

**Focused block experience** in a chosen area. Resident begins work on a QI or research project (continues through the entire 4 months).

**Miniblocks:**
- **Primary care:** Psychiatry; additional newborn experience.
- **Hospitalist:** Anesthesia for procedures, procedural sedation and pain management; work as a hospitalist in a community setting.

**Primary care:** Work in hospital or private clinic seeing patients, precepting other trainees, learning practice management and in some cases rounding on inpatients and newborns.

**Longitudinal experiences:**
- **Hospitalist:** Pulmonary, special needs, neurology, GI.
- **Primary care:** Orthopedics, special needs, dermatology, allergy, surgical subspecialties.

### Results from 3 Plus Years Experience

- 37 residents have done this over 3 years
- 16 in primary care; 4 hospitalist; 17 subspecialty
- No difference in board scores, OSCE performance compared to traditional schedule
- Satisfaction of participating residents and faculty mentors was high
- Resident self-assessments demonstrate improvement in skills and achievement of their goals
- Residents felt empowered to determine their learning needs and ask faculty to help meet their goals

### Challenges

- High administrative burden to help with scheduling experiences
- Hard to achieve 4 consecutive months; most did 3 and 1
- Culture change for faculty to have residents arrive for an experience with specific learning goals in mind
- Making the pre-fellowship experiences complimentary rather than 4 additional months of fellowship

### Successes

- Resident and mentor satisfaction is high
- A unique, positive experience
- Focused learning around specific goals
- Residents enjoy the flexibility despite working “harder” than on a traditional elective experience – efficient use of time
- Close longitudinal relationship with a mentor
- Helped to improve our overall residency wide experience with learning goals

### Sample learning goals

- Develop a tool for the systematic evaluation of tachycardia in the acute setting (cardiology block)
- Conduct well and ill visits in Spanish without an interpreter (primary care)
- Determine appropriate birth control options for an adolescent patient (primary care)
- Handle gastrostomy tube complications and change a G-tube (hospitalist)
- Develop a step-by-step approach to children with failure to thrive (primary care)