There is no question that in the world of academic medical centers, the residents are the interface between attending physicians, nurses, patients, and families; they are the glue which holds the pieces together. As medicine has changed over the last couple decades, this role that residents play has changed little. Despite duty hour restrictions and increasing requirements for supervision, residents are still key players in the care of any patient admitted to a teaching institution. Because residents are in the “trenches”, they are often among the first to recognize where the systems break down and without a doubt they are often the first to see where it impacts patient care.

For that reason, it is essential that any quality improvement or patient safety improvements in academic medical centers must involve residents as shareholders in the institution. At the University of New Mexico, we are working hard to ensure that any process improvement has input from the residents. Additionally, any quality improvement project by the residents is tied into the institution as a whole. This ensures that the efforts of the resident for quality improvement leads to lasting change within the institution. Without connecting residents and institutional quality improvement, we will fail in our quest to improve the care we provide to our patients. In this we cannot afford to fail.

We hope that we are training physicians who are capable of going forward with their careers literate in the language of quality improvement, capable of contributing and leading to process improvement initiatives, and driven by need to improve the health care systems in which they work.

The future of our health care system is in the hands of our trainees. We hope that we are training physicians who are capable of going forward with their careers literate in the language of quality improvement, capable of contributing and leading to process improvement initiatives, and driven by need to improve the health care systems in which they work. With this Journal, we are showcasing, with pride, what is being done in our institution. We hope that this work will produce a qualitative and lasting change for our patients and our health care system.

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