As part of the push to expand quality across the clinical enterprise, UAB Medicine started a Chief Quality Resident Program (CQRP) this year that exposes participants to relevant concepts and prepares them for potential leadership positions.

In addition to their primary residency duties, the 10 residents chosen for the inaugural year of the program have been given the opportunity to attend monthly lectures, participate on a clinical effectiveness redesign team, complete a quality and patient safety project, and audit UAB Quality Academy courses for a semester.

Led by Chief Medical Officer Loring Rue, MD, and Associate Chief Medical Officer Ben Taylor, MD, the program helps residents further their practical understanding of quality improvement concepts and techniques necessary to build and sustain high-quality patient care.

“Our intent is to get them exposed to the quality process and better understand how the things they learn in the curriculum are applied on the front lines of a large, complex organization,” Dr. Taylor says. “It’s an opportunity to connect with leaders and learn some of what they don’t teach you in medical school.”

Lecturers include Drs. Rue and Taylor as well as Hugh Shoff, MD, UAB Medicine's first Quality and Patient Safety Fellow.

“The Chief Quality Resident Program is an excellent introduction into a growing field that will ultimately change the landscape of medicine,” Dr. Shoff says. “These residents will gain a knowledge advantage in patient quality that will help groom them to become leaders in the discipline.”

Resident Response
This year’s residents are: William Benton, MD; Anna Hurst, MD; Tiffany Jackson, MD; Rajat Kalra, MD; Andrew Morris, MD; Daniel Pasko, MD; William Potter, MD; Starr Steinhilber, MD; Devaki Shilpa Sudha Surasi, MD; and Yaolin Zhou, MD.

“As a resident, improvements in such a large hospital seem very daunting, but the leaders of the CQRP break down each aspect to make it more manageable,” Dr. Steinhilber says. “Though they teach us aspects of doing a project and quality improvement principles, I found the best part to be learning the intricacies of the UAB system as they relate to quality – the structure of those involved, where data come from, who the stakeholders are, and how outcomes are measured.”

“The CQRP has provided a unique opportunity to broaden my exposure to and involvement with quality improvement processes, under the guidance of key hospital leadership figures,” Dr. Pasko says. “The benefits extend beyond my personal professional development, as I feel well-suited to share my experiences and improved understanding with my fellow residents.”

Dr. Taylor says it's crucial to get new physicians involved in quality early in their careers. They tend to approach new situations with fresh eyes toward making improvements, and understanding the reasons behind major initiatives and industry trends helps prepare them for such inevitable changes down the road.

“A lot of the dissatisfaction in medicine comes from feeling like something new is always being imposed upon you,” Dr. Taylor says. “This is an opportunity to learn it organically along the way as part of your training, and there is value in residents sharing with their peers.”

The Chief Quality Resident Program is offered to residents entering their junior or senior year. To learn more about the program and how to apply, please contact Lee Hammonds at lhammonds@uabmc.edu.