Utilizing Pediatric Chief Residents in Patient Flow Management: a Systems-Based Practice
Tolu Adebanjo MD, MPH, Natalie Villafranco MD, Nicole Hannemann MD, Kimberly Lehecka MD, Michelle Lyn MD, Deborah Hsu MD, MEd
Baylor College of Medicine (Houston)

Background
Waits, delays, and cancellations occur frequently in healthcare. Pediatric residents are sometimes unaware of how their daily work habits impact patient flow. Chief residents are leaders with detailed knowledge of inpatient structure and resident daily work flow. Spurred by a need for cultural change to improve patient flow metrics, our hospital administration created a new role, the Patient Flow Chief (Flow Chief), for pediatric chief residents.

Objectives
Describe the creation of an innovative role for pediatric chief residents in patient flow management and assess the Flow Chief’s effect on resident behaviors that influence patient flow.

Methods
Setting: Urban quaternary care children’s hospital. In our new role, we conducted a needs assessment through discussions with hospital administrators and survey distribution to all pediatric residents to gauge their views on census alerts, discharge barriers, and medical milestones. Six months post-implementation, we re-surveyed all residents to assess for behavior changes.

Results
Our needs assessment identified gaps in addressing discharge barriers, identifying safety issues, resident education on patient flow concepts, and working relationships between residency representatives and hospital administrators. Based on these findings, the Flow Chief role consists of 1) participating in administrative meetings 2) developing targeted resident education 3) troubleshooting physician-related discharge barriers 4) participating in quality improvement initiatives. Response rates for pre- and post-implementation resident surveys were 66% & 55% respectively. 47% pre- vs 60% post-implementation respondents indicated expediting discharges when the hospital was on census alert. 49% vs 61% indicated communicating patient discharge barriers with nursing. 72% vs 84% indicated knowing their patient’s medical milestones.

Conclusion
Pediatric chief residents can serve an important role to drive cultural change in patient flow management. Study of the Flow Chief’s impact on patient flow and safety at our hospital is ongoing.