Engaging Trainees in Improvement Projects: Launching the Quality and Safety Innovation Challenge
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Purpose
- Acquiring competency in systems-based practice and practice-based learning requires trainees to be actively engaged in quality and safety (Q/S) improvement projects.
- Aligning the clinical enterprise with educational priorities can also serve to meet shared goals of improving patient care.
- Developing a program to encourage trainees to participate in and lead Q/S projects, while providing them guidance, mentorship, and venues for scholarship and dissemination.
- Foster and highlight existing Q/S projects, catalyze new efforts, and promote team-based improvement projects.

Description of Innovation
- We launched the Quality & Safety Innovation Challenge (QSIC) for the 2010-11 academic year, and invited participation of trainee-led teams in a Q/S project competition. We developed thematic focus areas for project selection based on input and alignment with our respective medical centers (4 clinical campuses).
- 29 teams (73 trainees) submitted project proposals to the QSIC (Figure 1).
- 60 residents (36% of the program) are participating in a project.
- Participating teams designed and implemented innovative patient care solutions that were guided by the six thematic focus areas (Figure 2).
- In June 2011, our Department will host its inaugural Quality & Safety Symposium to celebrate the project work, acknowledge the award winners, and appreciate the wide efforts to improve patient care across our clinical sites.

Key Points and Lessons Learned
- Despite competing responsibilities, many trainees are committed to participating in Q/S projects, and creating the QSIC leveraged this growing need and interest.
- Programs that create strategic collaborations between academic departments, their training programs, and the clinical enterprise can align efforts around a shared set of goals focused on patient care.
- Programs such as the QSIC can further elevate the role of Q/S work into the academic mission.