The Institute Welcomes Incoming 2008-2009 Hospice & Palliative Medicine Fellows

The Institute is pleased to welcome incoming 2008-2009 Senator H. John Heinz III Hospice & Palliative Medicine Fellows, Drs Julie Childers and René Claxton. Both fellows are highly qualified, earning honors for their achievements and service, and we expect them to progress toward academic leadership.

Dr. Julie Childers returns to Pittsburgh, where she attended medical school, from an Internal Medicine residency program at the University of Rochester. She plans to combine her specialization in Hospice and Palliative Medicine with a focus in Geriatrics and Clinical Education. Her background includes fluency in American Sign Language and experience as an interpreter.

Dr. René Claxton comes from an Internal Medicine residency program at the University of Virginia Health System, Charlottesville, Virginia with a commitment to service in the community as evidenced by her hospice volunteer work in the United States and abroad where she’s taken her medical skills to serve those in need in Mexico. She has a strong sense of the humanistic and communication skills central to Hospice and Palliative Medicine and is also committed to developing her skills in Clinical Education.

The Institute Congratulates Faculty Member Dr. Liz Weinstein on Shadyside Foundation Grant Award for Teaching Residents Communication Skills

Congratulations to Section of Palliative Care Faculty Member and graduate of the Hospice & Palliative Medicine Fellowship Program, Dr. Elizabeth Weinstein. Dr Weinstein has been awarded a grant through the Shadyside Foundation for her project Communication Teaching for Residents on General Medicine and Geriatric Inpatient Services. The goal of this intervention is to improve the communication skills of medical residents with patients and families on the General Medicine and Geriatric inpatient services by providing communication skills instruction for Shadyside internal medicine residents throughout their training. Residents will learn communication skills through the following specific tasks:

- Giving bad news
- Conducting discussions about foregoing life sustaining therapies such as PEG tubes, AICD, mechanical ventilation, etc.
- Transitioning from curative to palliative therapy

Topics related to life-limiting illness were selected because these discussion have been identified by residents as being difficult and by patients and families as being important. In addition, the skills learned for these difficult conversations can be used on less emotionally charged conversations such as compliance with medications.