The Howard Hiatt Residency in Global Health Equity and Internal Medicine is made possible by the support of generous donors. To learn more, please contact Jennifer Watson at 617-525-6671.

Howard Hiatt Residency in Global Health Equity and Internal Medicine
2004-2005 Residents

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Increasing numbers of young physicians look to Paul Farmer, MD, PhD and Jim Yong Kim, MD, PhD as role models for careers dedicated to the health of impoverished people in the US and abroad.

In 2004, the Department of Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital created a unique residency program to address this growing interest. The Howard Hiatt Residency in Global Health Equity and Internal Medicine is a comprehensive four-year program that includes training in internal medicine; coursework in research methods, public policy and global health advocacy; and research and patient care experiences in impoverished settings. Already, fieldwork has taken residents to Haiti, Peru, Russia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, as well as to Boston’s urban neighborhoods. The residency program honors Howard Hiatt, MD, whose leadership and advocacy for global health equity span a fifty year career that includes service as chair of the Department of Medicine at Boston’s Beth Israel Hospital and Dean of the Harvard School of Public Health. Most recently, Dr. Hiatt joined with Paul Farmer and Jim Kim in founding the Brigham and Women’s Division of Social Medicine and Health Inequalities, which is dedicated to addressing global health disparities through training, education, research and service. Response to the new residency has been enthusiastic, attracting national attention from universities and teaching hospitals. Interest among young physicians is strong. In response, with strong institutional support and thanks to the generosity of individual donors, program enrollment doubled in 2005. This promising beginning suggests a bright future, extending Dr. Hiatt’s commitment and compassion to the next generation of physicians and improving the health of patients most in need around the world.
Claire Farel, MD’s interest in health equity stems in part from her work with disadvantaged HIV patients in rural North Carolina when she was a research assistant and clinical trials coordinator at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Farel also saw global health inequity firsthand while working as a hospital volunteer on pediatric malaria and meningitis wards in Malawi. As a volunteer with Bedouin and Ethiopian immigrant patients in Beer-sheva, Israel, she became interested in the ethical issues raised by clinical research involving indigent or uninsured patients, children, and the severely ill. Dr. Farel’s goal as a Global Health Equity Resident is to learn to structure effective outreach, treatment, and prevention programs in disadvantaged communities.

Dr. Farel earned her BA in Biological Anthropology in 1997 from Swarthmore College and received her MD in 2004 from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Dr. Farel’s research and laboratory experience includes participation in the National Institutes of Health Clinical Research Training program. The results of research on immune-based treatment strategies for HIV and hepatitis C, which she worked on while there, were published in several medical journals. In addition, at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Malawi, Dr. Farel was involved in a study of pediatric patients with bacterial meningitis.
Nancy Lange, MD’s interest in international health was initially sparked by her passion for learning about other cultures and languages. Working abroad, her interest quickly grew into a strong desire to work as a physician in resource-poor areas. Dr. Lange spent the summer after her first year in medical school on an epidemiological study of Leptospirosis, a water-borne disease, in Salvador, Brazil. She later spent part of her fourth year of medical school studying HIV medicine in Dakar, Senegal. In both of these experiences, Dr. Lange was inspired to see how physicians can be empowered to work towards the goals of fighting poverty and the inequities that lead to disease.

Dr. Lange received her BA in European History from Brown University in 1995 and her MD from Cornell University Medical School in 2003. In Senegal, Dr. Lange was involved in a national initiative to increase access to antiretroviral therapy for AIDS patients and collaborated on an article describing scaling up HIV health care centers and the provision of antiretroviral therapy. She was also involved in research conducted at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital regarding the psychological aspects of being HIV positive. At the NYU-Bellevue Program for Survivors of Torture, she provided comprehensive medical care to asylum seekers and political refugees.
Koji Nakashima, MD was exposed to health inequality as a volunteer in the emergency and orthopedics departments at St. Jude’s Hospital in St. Lucia, West Indies prior to his first year of medical school. His work there spurred his interest in global health equity and prompted him to pursue a career in international health care. After earning his BA in 1997 from Johns Hopkins University and a Masters in Health Sciences in 1998 from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Dr. Nakashima went on to receive his MD in 2004 from Loyola University Chicago’s Stritch School of Medicine. At Loyola, he co-founded a student chapter of Physicians for Human Rights. He developed an interest in the health needs of Haitians when he served as a medical volunteer in Port au Prince through the St. Boniface Haiti Foundation.

Dr. Nakashima has worked on medical research projects including: examining arm trauma at the Department of Orthopedics, Loyola University Medical Center; studying the effects of light on vision cells at the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, Johns Hopkins University; and developing models for cartilage construction at the Department of Orthopaedics, Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Nakashima expects to complete the Harvard Combined Medicine-Pediatrics Program in 2008.
Daniel Palazuelos, MD’s experience doing research in Mexico between his third and fourth years of medical school helped shape his thinking about international health care and inequality. Working in the Social Security hospital system in Mexico City and Ciudad Guzman, Dr. Palazuelos interviewed approximately 500 Mexican patients about their ideas on health care and the process of dying. While the study’s primary goal was to identify ways to better provide health care for Hispanic populations, Dr. Palazuelos came home with much more, particularly an understanding of the importance of strong patient-physician relationships. He believes that one of the most important goals in international medicine is to foster strong ties with international colleagues in order to provide more culturally sensitive care.

Dr. Palazuelos earned his BA in 1999 from Brown University and his MD in 2004 from Brown University Medical School. Dr. Palazuelos’ research experience includes a range of work on the health needs of Hispanic populations, including on: end of life care in Mexico; the use of hospice services among Hispanic-Americans; and Mexican immigrant mental health. At Brown University’s Center for Gerontology, he contributed to projects including a paper comparing international rates of feeding tube use in demented patients and a paper for the World Health Organization documenting nursing home care.
Amy Sievers, MD’s first exposure to health inequality came from the years she spent growing up on the Marshall Islands. As a hospital volunteer on the island of Ebeye, she witnessed the devastating impact of poverty, malnutrition, overpopulation, and lack of adequate sanitation. Dr. Sievers attributes much of her desire to become a physician to the doctors on the island who showed her that dedicated individuals can bring about change and progress. She also had a strong role model in her mother, a hospital administrator who worked tirelessly to get a type B influenza vaccine incorporated into the Marshallese childhood vaccination schedule.

Dr. Sievers earned her BA in 1995 from Yale University and an MD and MPH in 2004 from Northwestern University. She also has an MA in Music from the Yale School of Music. Dr. Sievers has been involved in research on Alzheimer’s disease at the Massachusetts General Hospital Department of Neuroradiology. While there, she also contributed to work published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology. Her research at Chicago’s Cook County Jail examined completion and side effect rates for various courses of tuberculosis treatment. She also designed a database to track follow-up to cervical cancer screening of female prisoners. Dr. Sievers is eager to do fieldwork and eventually to become involved in large-scale policy work on HIV treatment in resource-poor settings.
David Walton, MD entered Harvard Medical School in 1998 after receiving his BA from Augustana College. The summer after his first year at Harvard, he made his first trip to Haiti as a research assistant to Dr. Paul Farmer and the Partners In Health team. Since then, Dr. Walton has spent a number of months each year working in Haiti. Significantly, he was part of the team that helped to transform a nearly defunct clinic in Haiti’s central plateau into a fully functioning primary health care center in June of 2002. After receiving his MD from Harvard Medical School in 2003, Dr. Walton began his residency at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in 2004.

Based on his extensive work with Partners In Health, Dr. Walton has significant experience in delivering HIV/AIDS care in resource poor settings. His research work at Harvard Medical School includes exploring emerging infectious diseases in Latin America and the resurgence of drug resistant strains of tuberculosis in the former Soviet Union. He has contributed to numerous published articles on AIDS and tuberculosis. Although conditions in Haiti are difficult, Dr. Walton is always eager to return and continues to spend significant time there.