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Conversations, stories can change academic medicine culture
Keynote speakers Thomas Inui, MD, and Paul Gardent discuss improvements in resident learning environment at 2007 ACGME Annual Educational Conference

CHICAGO, March 14, 2007 – Thomas S. Inui, MD, president and CEO of Indiana University School of Medicine, used a haiku about a pepper tree that turns into a dragonfly to illustrate how academic medical centers can use conversations and the sharing of stories to change the culture of an organization.

Just as the pepper tree in the poem sprouted wings to become a dragonfly, so can an institution “create an organization’s collective future vision” through interviews and conversations with the people who work in that institution, he explained. These include conversations between clinicians and patients, clinicians and clinicians, and clinicians and themselves. Such an approach was taken at Indiana University School of Medicine, said Dr. Inui, where a series of interviews with 80 staff members helped the institution improve its culture and plan for its future. As a result, student satisfaction with IUSM rose from about 80% in 2002 to 95% in 2006, and applications increased.

AGME Board member Paul Gardent presented the second keynote speech. Mr. Gardent discussed the ACGME's "Learning Innovation and Improvement Project." The goal of the project is to gather information on the attributes of 10 to 15 institutions with excellent learning environments for resident physicians and to use that information to help other institutions create better links between graduate medical education and good patient care. Although the project results are still preliminary, said Mr. Gardent, they indicate that exemplary sponsoring institutions of graduate medical education have, "an integrated vision of education, research and patient care; a belief that that patient care can be improved because of graduate medical education, a centralized structure that is cohesive with a sense of purpose, and a learning culture."

The 2007 ACGME Annual Educational Conference was held March 2-4 at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center in Kissimmee, Florida, and featured 51 sessions, technology consultations, and a poster exhibit. Nearly 1,000 people attended, including program directors, program coordinators, designated institutional officials of graduate medical education programs, and residents.

The 2008 ACGME Annual Educational Conference will take place Feb. 28 – March 2 at the Gaylord Texan in Dallas.

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The ACGME is a private, non-profit organization that accredits 8,200 residency programs in 126 specialties and subspecialties that educate 103,000 residents. Its mission is to improve the quality of health care in the United States by assessing and advancing the quality of resident physicians' education.