Leonard Palumbo, Jr., MD Faculty Achievement Award

Clay Bordley, MD

Dr. Clay Bordley came to Duke in 2002, hired by Dr. Karen Frush, after a chance meeting at their childrens’ preschool. Academically, he came as a clinician-researcher and evolved into a clinician-educator and administrator. When Dr. Bordley arrived, children in the Emergency Department were cared for in a hallway with few curtains. With the opening of the new Emergency Department, pediatric emergency medicine got the attention and resources it deserved and in 2007 became a division in the Department of Pediatrics and Dr. Bordley has lead this group from the beginning. The group has grown from two persons to nine, and gone from a 12 hour a day model to 24/7 service.

During this same time, pediatric hospital medicine has become a new discipline and Dr. Bordley has been tasked with creating a pediatric hospital medicine program at Duke. The program has grown from only Dr. Bordley to 10 people and has changed the way general pediatric patients are cared for at Duke. Dr. Bordley has handed over leadership of this group six months ago to his first hire Dr. Katy Bartlett, who has hit the ground running.

Dr. Bordley has always seen himself as a player-coach, not a boss. He has been fortunate to hire and retain great people who have propelled PEM and PHM forward here at Duke. He still loves walking into the room of a four-year-old with asthma or a broken arm in the PED and cracking the code that will help them relax and know they will get better. He still loves sharing with nervous trainees how to establish rapport with anxious children, do various procedures, or run a resuscitation.

Receiving this award is an honor and a humbling reminder of how lucky he is to care for children, shape trainees and work with fantastic colleagues.

“Dr. Bordley’s compassionate patient care and his down to earth mentoring of students and staff in all aspects of the healthcare system demonstrate his untiring push to make DUHS a better place for young people to learn and for our community to get the healthcare it deserves.”