



Ex-health secretary to join USF

7/21/2009 © Health News Florida

Dr. Robert Brooks, Florida's former secretary of health and a former Florida state legislator, is joining University of South Florida Health, where he is expected to help build the school's health leadership program and spearhead the medical school's admissions process.

In a Tuesday news release, USF announced Brooks was recruited from Florida State to "build upon his well-established research and teaching record." Brooks will be a professor of medicine and public health and associate vice president for health leadership.

"USF will tap Dr. Brooks' distinctive and well-proven academic talents," Dr. Stephen Klasko, dean of medicine and CEO of USF Health, said in the release. "He will play a directive role in the medical student admissions process as we seek to bring diversity, competence and exceptional quality to our student body. Dr. Brooks will also be responsible for building the health leadership program at USF Health. We are exceptionally fortunate to bring Bob Brooks' talents, knowledge and experience to USF Health."

The release said Brooks will also work with USF's clinical and research team to design a new system of care to more effectively manage diabetes and other chronic disorders, and to build upon the program of patient safety research with which he has previously collaborated.

USF's recently announced partnership with the Lehigh Valley Health Network is expected to benefit from Brooks' leadership training for medical students. In that program, students from Pennsylvania will attend USF for their first two years of medical school, then return to Lehigh Valley for their third and fourth years of clinical medical education.

USF said Brooks will have a dual role as a professor: in the Division of Infectious Diseases (Department of Internal Medicine) in the College of Medicine and in the Department of Health Policy and Management in the College of Public Health.

Brooks has served as the associate dean for health affairs at Florida State University, where he helped establish the first new allopathic (M.D.) medical school in the United States in more than 20 years. Since joining FSU in 2001, according to the press release, he has started five separate Centers of Excellence on Terrorism, Public Health, Patient Safety, Rural Health and Global Health.

He was appointed Florida's secretary of health in 1999. He had previously served in the Florida House of Representatives and as chief of infectious diseases at Orlando Regional Medical Center.

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