



Eric Walker



Tiffany Smith-Sutton

## 'Grateful beyond measure'

**D**octor: "Students, we hope many of you will practice primary care in areas where it's least available."

Students: "We'd love to, but we have a load of academic debt. We might have to take higher-paying jobs."

Doctor: "What if we covered your tuition, for starters?"

Talk about a conversational attention-getter, courtesy of the National Health Service Corps.

Here's how it works: The NHSC will cover your tuition, fees and other educational expenses for four years. In return, you'll agree to serve at an NHSC-approved site for four years. Those sites include medically underserved urban, rural or frontier communities across the U.S. The program also will help with your living expenses through a tax-free monthly stipend.

In October, first-year students Tiffany Smith-Sutton and Eric Walker became the fifth and sixth College of Medicine students who've received these prestigious NHSC scholarships.

"For most individuals in my community, health care is a luxury," Walker said. "If afforded the opportunity to serve as a National Health Service Corps member, I believe I will be able to connect with my patients in a very unique way because I would not be too far removed from their position."

Smith-Sutton, also eager to do hands-on work in a community where the need is greatest, added: "And as a wife and mother of two, funding my medical education with the least amount of debt is top-priority. I am grateful beyond measure for this scholarship."

For more information: <http://nhsc.brsa.gov/>

## Expanding mental health research

**C**linical research at the College of Medicine is following a familiar footprint, seeking to include a demographic profile that reflects Florida's diversity. The college's developing Clinical Research Network is designed with the idea of learning from the patient population served by many of the nearly 2,500 physicians throughout the state who teach FSU medical students. And, in turn, discovering ways to improve patient care across the spectrum of human disease.

Mental health is no exception.

In May, Florida State was invited to become an associate member in the National Network of Depression Centers. Part of the attraction was Florida State's community-based medical education program and the inherent relationships with community physicians.

The national network was seeking to expand into Florida, and partnering with a medical school that has relationships with physicians and their patients throughout the state was a selling point.

"To date, research on causes and treatments for mood disorders has mostly included specialty-care patients at single centers and sites, which has limited its impact," said Heather Flynn, associate professor and vice chair for research in the medical school's Department of Behavioral Sciences and Social Medicine.

"Access to such a broad and diverse patient population is vital in order to develop a better understanding of mental health and other health issues that can be relevant to many different kinds of people."

Flynn, who has been chair of the Women in Depression Network for 15 years, said progress in developing treatments for mood disorders has been slow for several decades, mostly because researchers have been working on the problem independently.

The NNDC's mission is to develop and foster connections to use the power of a network to advance scientific discovery and to provide stigma-free, evidence-based care to patients with depressive and bipolar illnesses.

"By uniting in a collaborative network, we bring the best minds together, regardless of their location, to advance the state of the science in the field of mood disorders," said John Greden, founding chair of the NNDC. "Florida State University will greatly contribute to that effort."

The idea behind the network comes from the National Cancer Institutes, which are based on a philosophy that nobody in the U.S. should be more than 200 miles from a cancer center. The NNDC is a long way from that goal, but it has been seeking new partners. This is its first foothold in Florida, the third-largest state in the country.

"We're trying to get mental health and mood disorders on the same level as cancer in the way we look at it from a public health perspective," Flynn said.



Heather Flynn