

'Small-town family doc' in the Navy

Family medicine takes on new meaning in the Navy. For Cmdr. Kimberly Toone (PIMS, '94), "family" includes recruits away from home for the first time, sailors who may be expecting a baby, and aging veterans with aches and pains and war stories galore.

It also includes students from the Pensacola Regional Campus. Toone is serving a three-year hitch in Pensacola, as aerospace medicine specialty leader and family medicine staff member. The Naval Hospital hosts our students for family medicine rotations.

Toone, who attended our Alumni Reunion in April, says observing military medicine underscores important lessons for our students.

"Say they get sick," Toone says of her sailors. "They're living in a barracks. The only person

to take care of them in that barracks is their buddy, who can't take time off from training. To send that person back and potentially spread a dangerous disease? Not a good idea. While not medically indicated, a 'social admission' to the hospital is the best for the patient and perhaps for the unit he or she serves."

Other things our students see: "They see that old-school, small-town family doc where you truly have a relationship with your patients. And they see that, in the military, the external factors of HMOs and insurance companies limiting your ability to practice medicine don't really exist. We still practice within standards of care, but military providers become stewards of the health-care dollars and self-regulate to some extent."

PIMS (Program in Medical Sciences) predated the College of Medicine. Students completed

their first year of medical training at FSU; most transferred to the University of Florida for their M.D. Like the College of Medicine, PIMS emphasized service and collegiality. Toone's class had a Learning Community tucked in the College of Nursing basement.

"We'd come in some mornings, some folks would be asleep on the couch, and you weren't sure if they actually had gone home. We had the kitchenette and locker. For that year we were all relatively inseparable. When we transferred to Florida, the same group pretty much stayed together." Some still keep in touch.

In her brief time with our students, Toone has been impressed. "They're all smarter than I was," she says. "They carry themselves professionally. And they're very respectful of everyone there who's trying to teach and learn."

