



AHCA Teams With FSU Med School to Expand Family-Practice Programs

By Margie Menzel
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Baby boomers are getting older – and so are primary-care doctors and nurses – as Florida's population continues to grow. The combination could be a problem for the state health-care system during the next two decades.

Many younger physicians are opting for more lucrative careers as specialists rather than as traditional family doctors. The physician shortage is most acute in Florida's rural areas and inner cities.

So on Friday, the Agency for Healthcare Administration joined Florida State University's College of Medicine in touting eighty-million dollars of state funding to expand family-practice training programs statewide.

John Fogarty, dean of the FSU College of Medicine, says more young people are graduating from medical school in Florida than there are residency openings for them. So many would-be Florida doctors go to other states.

"The real problem is making sure that we have the right kind of doctors", explained Fogarty. "Florida, as it grew, really according to my perspective was very much focused on high-end specialty care. What we really need are more doctors in the rural, the underserved, the urban areas."

This week a Florida House committee received a report indicating problems as the state moves toward 2030, when the first batch of baby boomers will hit their mid-80s. By that time, Florida's population is projected to grow by twenty-five percent, with nearly a quarter of the residents expected to be ages 65 or older.