

Daytona Beach's students will be tomorrow's doctors

DR. LUCKEY DUNN

Published: Sunday, October 6, 2013 at 5:30 a.m.

The extended debate over the Affordable Care Act has some people worried: With so many newly insured patients seeking basic medical care, who's producing the new doctors to treat them?

Some of those new physicians trained — and might remain — right here in Daytona Beach.

Part of the Florida State University College of Medicine's mission is to produce primary-care physicians for Florida — and Daytona Beach is one of the medical school's six regional campuses statewide for third- and fourth-year students.

Our first group of students started here in 2007 and graduated in 2009. Since then, 84 students who came through Daytona Beach have gone on to residencies all over the country, in programs such as Johns Hopkins, Brown, Stanford, University of California San Francisco, the University of North Carolina, the University of Florida, Orlando Regional Medical Center, Florida Hospital Orlando and Halifax Health. More than a dozen of our alumni have been recognized as their program's outstanding resident.

Of our 84 graduates, 61 percent — well above the national average — have gone into a primary-care specialty like family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics or OB-GYN.

Because Florida has too few residency programs to provide the necessary training for the growing number of medical-school grads, nearly two-thirds of our alumni leave the state after graduation. That's significant because, historically, doctors tend to put down roots where they get their residency training.

However, Florida State alumni may be bucking that trend.

Some of the evidence comes from our sister regional campus in Orlando, which started graduating students four years before we did in Daytona Beach and, therefore, has more numbers to crunch. Consider this: Fully 70 percent of the students who spent years three and four in Orlando are now returning to Florida to practice.

I believe the students we've trained here will follow that trend.

Recently, Dr. Stephen Viel, who was in our first class, returned to our community. He completed his emergency medicine training at Johns Hopkins and started working in the emergency department at Halifax. Three more graduates of the first two classes are considering returning to our area in the next year as they complete their residencies.

To what do we owe our success? First, to the students themselves. We spend much time choosing students who embrace our mission of patient-centered medicine, collegial learning and community service. Some of the best qualities of an exemplary doctor are things you can't teach.

But there are countless things that you can teach, and so we loudly thank our community physicians and clinical faculty. They've shattered the misconception that practicing physicians would have neither the time nor the teaching skills to train medical students. Our faculty members share their knowledge, develop relationships with our graduates, communicate with them regularly, visit them in their residencies, attend their weddings and, yes, recruit them back to Volusia.

The other keys to our success have been our faculty's patients and staff. Patients have graciously allowed our students to work alongside their doctors to make them among the most patient-centered residents/physicians in the country.

Dr. Kendall Riley (class of 2011) who graduated from Spruce Creek High School, attended UF for her undergraduate degree, spent two years at our Daytona Beach campus, is in the final year of her pediatrics residency at UF in Gainesville and was selected to be a chief resident. She hopes to return to our community to practice, too. You'll love having her, or any of our alumni, as your doctor.

Dunn is a Daytona Beach native, a longtime family physician in Volusia County and dean of the FSU College of Medicine's Daytona Beach regional campus.

Copyright © 2013 News-JournalOnline.com — All rights reserved. Restricted use only.