

Family Medicine Clinic to become "teaching hospital"

Family Medicine Clinic will begin residency in 2014

Written by Dayna Harpster Jun. 27, 2013

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Lorenzo Hernandez, left, a fourth-year medical student at Florida State University, takes the medical history of Nelson Gampfer on Wednesday at Lee Memorial Hospital in Fort Myers. Hernandez is participating in an advanced family medicine clerkship. / AMANDA INSCORE/THE NEWS-PRESS

The groundwork is being set for Lee Memorial Health System to be called a teaching hospital.

In April the final nails should be in place at the renovated Family Medicine Clinic, where six graduates of Florida State University Medical School will begin a residency in July 2014 in the first program of its kind in Southwest Florida.

Buildout is under way on the seventh floor of the medical office building adjacent to Lee Memorial

Hospital, along with a retooling on the eighth floor. Most of the teaching and administrative staff is in position for the \$3.4 million project, which the hospital board approved in January.

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education granted the program full credentials in May, about a year after Dr. Gary Goforth was hired by FSU to begin the program at Lee Memorial. Three of the residency program's top administrators work in Fort Myers but are on the medical school faculty. Videoconferencing allows Goforth to remain at the residency site all but about three or four times a year.

Goforth came to Fort Myers from Self Regional Healthcare in Greenwood, S.C., where he was director of its residency program for 13 years.

Two members of the faculty came with Goforth from South Carolina. Another was hired locally, and one is expected soon from Indiana. Additional staff hired for the program includes a medical assistant, licensed practical nurses and a customer support clerk. Much of the residency program budget of \$2.3 million annually will pay salaries, Goforth said.



Joseph Glann of RD Johnson Construction Inc., removes an old doorway while completing the demolition of old offices on Wednesday at Lee Memorial Hospital. / AMANDA INSCORE/THE NEWS-PRESS

Residents will work at the Family Medicine Center, which opened as a Lee Physician Group practice with 10 examination rooms in July 2012. When the renovation is complete — the target is April — there will be 20 examination rooms plus offices, a conference room and classrooms.

The investment is expected to go a long way to cure a long-anticipated shortage of primary care doctors in the area. Florida will need an additional 12,000 doctors during the next decade because the population is growing and the average age of working doctors is 50, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Lee Memorial Health System and a communitywide steering committee of health and business leaders, the Healthy Lee visioning project, heard those numbers loud and clear. Bearing in mind that studies show more than half of new doctors stay in the geographical areas where they finish residency, setting up a family medicine program, where the local need is greatest, has been a priority for several years.

Students from FSU School of Medicine are not strangers to Southwest Florida. Educational workshops and open houses have brought FSU students to Southwest Florida and Goforth and his colleagues to several of its six regional medical school campuses. Many students have fulfilled shorter observational stints called clerkships here, as have other students from across the country.

Fourth-year medical students Kevin Carnevale and Lorenzo Hernandez leave today for their next clerkships after spending several weeks seeing patients at the Family Medicine Center and at Lee Memorial Health System hospitals. They've been living at Cypress Cove during their stay, but plans are for future residents to stay in a house the program plans to purchase locally, Goforth said.

The clerkship here has been the best of the seven he's done so far, said Carnevale, a Rhode Island native who earned his undergraduate degree at FGCU. "The integration of the electronic records system is great, and the physicians have been very helpful," said Hernandez.

Recruitment for the six first-year residents will start the first three days of August at the American College of Family Physicians meeting in Kansas City, where 1,000 medical students are expected to begin weighing their options for residency. Goforth expects to interview about 50 potential residents between October and January 2014. Residency programs and students submit their choices for "match week" in March, after which contracts go out and preparation for July startup begin.

Florida State University Family Medicine Residency Program at Lee Memorial Health System

First-year residents begin: July 2014

Number of residents per year: Six for each of the three years of study

Faculty and staff: Dr. Gary Goforth is a professor and founding program director. He is paid by FSU, as are Kathleen Mattis, residency program coordinator, and Elena Reyes, a psychologist and director of behavioral medicine for the Family Medicine Center. Two other doctors are assistant professors of medicine and one is an associate professor of medicine at FSU and employed by Lee Memorial Health System.

Classes and clinical: Residents will see patients and hear lectures on the seventh and eighth floors of Lee Memorial Hospital, in its Family Medicine Center, which when finished will comprise 20 examination rooms, a conference room, offices and classrooms in 13,000 square feet. The \$3.4 million renovation was approved by the system's hospital board in January, which helped the program secure its residency accreditation, approved in May and effective July 1.

Rotations: The residents will complete a 36-month curriculum to include rotations in adult medicine; behavioral medicine; pediatrics; obstetrics and gynecology; general surgery; practice management; community medicine; geriatrics; sports medicine; emergency medicine; dermatology; ophthalmology; ear, nose and throat; urology; orthopedics; critical care; neurology; and cardiology.

Openings for new patients: Available for low-risk obstetrical care and pediatrics. Patient load for adults is currently full. Call 343-3831.

For more information: Go to <http://www.leememorial.org/mainlanding/fsu-residency.asp>