

Florida State University Family Medicine Residency Program Earns Accreditation

PRESS RELEASE PR Newswire (/author/pr-newswire)

Oct. 25, 2019, 04:56 PM

WINTER HAVEN, Fla., Oct. 25, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- The Florida State University College of Medicine Family Medicine Residency at BayCare Health System (Winter Haven) has received accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).



The residency program was announced in early 2018 as a partnership between Florida State University College of Medicine, Winter Haven Hospital and BayCare Medical Group, with the purpose to improve access to primary care services and assist with physician recruitment efforts in Polk County.

Later in 2018, Florida State University College of Medicine hired founding Program Director **Nathan P. Falk**, MD. Dr. Falk's initial responsibilities included development of a curriculum for graduate medical education, recruitment of faculty to help train residents, and completion of the accreditation application. The application was formally submitted in May this year, with the first site visit from ACGME in August.

Also in August, the program's Family Health Center opened. The primary care clinic, located at 1201 First St. South in Winter Haven, currently employs three full-time family medicine physicians who also serve as FSU faculty. The Center accepts appointments for patients from newborn to adult age for wellness visits, plus back-to-school and sports physicals, non-operative orthopedic care, sports medicine, women's health and pharmacy consultations. An open house is being held for the Family Health Center on November 14.

"It's been a steady journey to get to this point," said Dr. Falk. "The current faculty and I are ready to switch gears and start the next chapter of this endeavor."

Following accreditation, the residency program begins recruiting residents. Recruitment is through an electronic and uniform system instituted and maintained by the National Resident Matching Program® (NRMP). The annual process allows candidates to select and programs to simultaneously fill post-graduate training positions accredited by the ACGME. At this time of year, residency programs are reviewing candidate applications and conducting onsite interviews. In February, candidates rank their preferred residency programs, while the programs also rank the candidates they have interviewed. In March, the NRMP announces candidate matches with programs according to their rank lists. Match Day in 2020 is March 20.

The FSU program in Winter Haven is expected to accept six medical school graduates who will begin their three-year residency training in July.

"The program will be excited to welcome the first group of residents," said **Joan Meek**, M.D, associate dean for graduate medical education at the FSU College of Medicine. "The need for primary care physicians is acute in Florida, especially in more rural communities. This newly accredited program will allow the family medicine residency program to impact health-care outcomes and improve access to primary-care physicians in the community. In addition, the residents will have the opportunity to receive their training in underserved areas of the state. Hopefully, many will continue to practice in the Winter Haven community after completion of their residency training."

The residency program will add new residents each year. In addition to receiving in-depth training in the field of family medicine, the residents will train and provide care in a community with significant needs for more primary-care physicians.

"Not only does this residency program improve access to health care for residents of Polk County, it also provides educational and economic benefits for the whole community," said **Steve Nierman**, Winter Haven Hospital president and BayCare market leader for Polk County. "We are grateful to the community support we have received in developing this program, and are well on our way to enhancing the availability and delivery of family medicine."

About Florida State University College of Medicine

The Florida State University College of Medicine was founded in 2000 with a mission to educate and develop exemplary physicians who practice patient-centered health care, discover and advance knowledge, and are responsive to community needs, especially through service to elder, rural, minority and underserved populations.

About Winter Haven Hospital

Winter Haven Hospital, Inc. located in Winter Haven, Florida, includes a 468-bed acute care hospital and a 61-bed obstetric hospital, respectively referred to as Winter Haven Hospital and Winter Haven Women's Hospital. Winter Haven Hospital, Inc. joined the BayCare Health System in August 2013. Winter Haven

Hospital was founded in 1926, and today concentrates in the treatment of heart disease, cancer, stroke, orthopedic conditions, and behavioral health. The hospital also provides emergency care; outpatient diabetes education; endoscopy and surgical services; cardiac, neurological, orthopedic and pulmonary rehabilitation; and imaging services. The Women's Hospital opened in 1987 and specializes in maternity services, neonatal care, and breast health. For more information, call (863) 293-1121 or visit WinterHavenHospital.org

About BayCare

BayCare is a leading not-for-profit health care system that connects individuals and families to a wide range of services at 15 hospitals and hundreds of other convenient locations throughout the Tampa Bay and central Florida regions. Inpatient and outpatient services include acute care, primary care, imaging, laboratory, behavioral health, home care, and wellness. Our mission is to improve the health of all we serve through community-owned, health care services that set the standard for high-quality, compassionate care.

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