

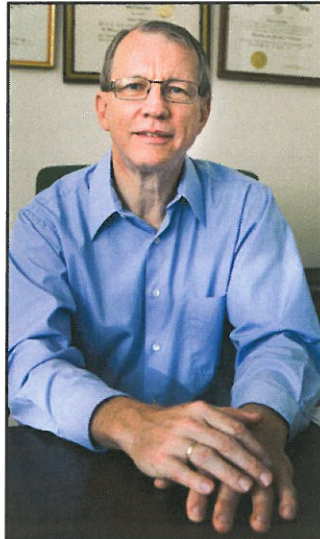
# A Seminole connection

## Archbold partners with FSU College of Medicine

**W**hile dozens of Florida State University medical students have quietly developed their clinical skills just across the Georgia border for nearly a decade, FSU College of Medicine Dean John P. Fogarty said it's time to loudly proclaim Thomasville as one of the best-kept secrets of the medical school's success.

A few College of Medicine alumni have settled in South Georgia to practice, returning the favor to a community that needs them. Some of those alumni, in turn, have joined the College of Medicine's clerkship faculty and teach our students in clinical settings in and around Thomasville.

"Thomasville has done a magical job of welcoming and making a significant investment in our students for eight years now," Fogarty said. "And it's a perfect fit with our mission. Many of these areas in South Georgia are terribly underserved in terms of the kinds of doctors they need. So it just made sense for us to think about Thomasville. Archbold has been a wonderful partner."



Submitted photos

Rudy J. Hehn, MD, Clerkship Administrator of the Florida State University Medical School Tallahassee and Thomasville campus.

The feeling is mutual, said Rudy Hehn, the Archbold physician who's largely credited with the program's success — and who acknowledges that this partnership has largely "flown under the radar" until now.

"The doctors like the students," said Hehn, who's lived in Thomasville for 30 years. "And they feel like medical education strength-

ens their own commitment to keeping current. It's a way of making sure that we're not becoming stagnant in our medical knowledge, because the students won't let you do that."

Added Mel Hartsfield, Archbold's chief medical officer: "It's valued by our medical staff. Many of them are FSU grads and like being part of their university."

The students, meanwhile, feel as if Archbold becomes their personal hospital. Said alumna Randa Perkins, who now works at Tallahassee Memorial: "If you're a student and know you're committed to primary care and want to experience everything, come to Thomasville."

As director of community clinical relations, Mollie Hill has helped establish the College of Medicine's six regional campuses and two clinical training sites across Florida. Sometimes that process has involved heavy lifting. Not in Thomasville. (In case you're confused: Thomasville itself is not a regional campus; it's an offshoot of the Tallahassee campus.)

"Early on," Hill recalled, "the Thomasville medical community and Archbold hospital really wanted to be involved." But the College of Medicine team was hip-deep in the logistical challenges of creating a unique, multi-campus medical school that

### The partnership

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uses community physicians as its faculty. "Initially we literally didn't have time to add Thomasville, but they never lost their enthusiasm."

When the inaugural students wrapped up their first two years of study at the main campus and dispersed to one of the regional campuses for clinical training in Years 3 and 4, there were concerns about how many more students Tallahassee's physicians could absorb.

"We were keeping the Tallahassee campus to 10 students, rather than 20, because here we also train all of our first- and second-year students in the community," Hill said.

But students didn't like that limit.

"A lot of them like to stay close to Tallahassee because this is where they did their first couple of years; they have spouses here, jobs here, houses here, family here," Hehn said. "So they spilled over into Thomasville because we have a large group of doctors who want to teach."

In 2004, FSU and Archbold signed an affiliation agreement.

"But it never would have worked," Hill said, "without



Fourth year medical student Shermeeka Hogans-Mathews consults with physician William L. Cooper, MD, during her family practice medical school rotation at the McIntosh Clinic.

the private donations, the contributions by the hospital and finding the right person to coordinate it."

## The investment

In 2005, the Williams Family Foundation of Georgia created the Thomasville Endowment for the Advancement of Medical Education and made a commitment of \$1,000,001. (The extra dollar pushed the state match from 70 percent to 75 percent.) At the end of March, the endowment stood at nearly \$1.5 million.

Also in 2005, the Archbold created the Archbold Fund for Excellence in Medical Education and made a five-year, \$500,000 commitment for cash and in-kind gifts.

The fund supports the administrative and program needs associated with the Thomasville teaching site at Archbold. A follow-up gift agreement from Archbold was signed in 2011, providing \$262,500 in cash and gifts-in-kind over five years. That commitment continues the medical center's support of

the Archbold Fund for Excellence in Medical Education.

## The leadership

Hehn is an unassuming but enthusiastic champion of the Thomasville students. "Dr. Hehn gives us re-

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sponsibilities and tasks to encourage and increase our confidence in making decisions and taking on the full responsibility of taking care of a patient," then-fourth-year student Judy Lin said earlier this year when Hehn received a teaching award. "However, at the root of his success in teaching medical students is the fact that he really cares about how each student is doing. He makes every effort to be aware of which rotation we are on, who we are working with and encourages us to approach him with our concerns. Without fail, every conversation that a student has with Dr. Hehn ends with him asking one of us, 'Is there anything I can do for you?'"

Mel Hartsfield formerly was dean of the Tallahassee



Archbold supporters Joe and Theresa Brown host an annual welcome reception for FSU medical students who are placed at Archbold for their third and fourth year rotations.

regional campus and, therefore, has seen this partnership from both sides. When he stepped down, he assured his successor, distant cousin Ron Hartsfield, that he could depend on Hehn to keep the

Thomasville program running smoothly. (Both Hartsfields and Hehn are alumni of FSU's Program in Medical Sciences, forerunner of the College of Medicine.)

"He's a hospitalist," Mel Hartsfield said of Hehn. (That is, he takes the place of your regular doctor if you're hospitalized.) "He has contact with the students all the time. That's an additional benefit for students coming here."

Hehn says he lines up students' credentials for Thomasville, nearby Cairo, Camilla and Quitman. When they arrive, he orients them. He tries to figure out what the student particularly needs to learn and, therefore, who the best physician/teacher might be.

"Rudy knows the people, knows the ground, is respected, knows the students, monitors the students, is respected by them and trusted," Ron Hartsfield said.

Hehn, in turn, credits his Tallahassee counterparts,

the Thomasville medical staff and the Archbold leadership: "Jim Story, our former CEO, and current CEO Perry Mustian have clearly done everything they can to make this program work."

## The students

The first three students arrived in 2006 just after Archbold had set up clinical rotations for them.

"This was a new experience for almost everyone involved," alumna Perkins recalled, "but you would have thought that they had been doing this for 20 years. If you had an interest in doing anything, they made it happen. I really got to get my hands dirty."

Elving Colon arrived a year after Perkins, left for his residency, then came back.

"I got to know the medical community very well," said Colon, who now prac-

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tices family medicine at Archbold. "It's an underserved community, and I knew they were looking for family physicians to return. So it was a no-brainer."

He said Thomasville patients love having students care for them, because students often have more time than the attending physician.

"I haven't had a patient turn a student down," he said. "I think that says a lot."

Now Colon is not only seeing his own patients but also mentoring our students, such as third-year Michael Quinif, who grew up in Thomasville.

And, of course, there's free housing. Students live in a Tudor-style building that long ago was a nurses'

dormitory, just a few blocks down Gordon Avenue from Archbold.

## The community

As new third-year students come to town, the community reaches out to them — most notably through an outdoor party that Theresa and Joe Brown host. Though Theresa downplays their annual reception, it symbolizes the whole town's hospitable approach to our students.

It began in 2007, when she was on the Archbold Foundation board. "I think we ought to get to know the med students," she told the board. "We could have a reception or something."

This September, once again, in the tastefully landscaped backyard of the home she inherited from her mother, just a block down from Archbold, the latest group of Thomasville students were wined and dined and otherwise pampered. Theresa Brown gave them

## PARTNERSHIP TIMELINE

- 2000: College of Medicine established.
- 2001: First students arrive at main campus.
- 2003: First regional campuses open in Tallahassee, Pensacola and Orlando.
- 2004: Archbold signs affiliation agreement with College of Medicine to become teaching site.
- 2005: Gift agreements establish Thomasville Endowment for Advancement of Medical Education and Archbold Fund for Excellence in Medical Education.
- 2006: Rudy Hehn, M.D., selected as Thomasville clerkship administrator; first College of Medicine students arrive in Thomasville.

gift baskets containing, among other things, a "Pines and Plantations" cookbook and mayhaw jelly.

"Thomasville is very welcoming," said Brown, a gra-

cious FSU graduate.

"If someone comes to our community, we're going to make sure they feel welcome and a part of the community."



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