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New internal medicine residency program at TMH set to open in 2012

BY DOUG BLACKBURN • DEMOCRAT SENIOR WRITER • PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 22, 2010 2:05PM

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Florida State University and Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare are well on the way toward establishing an internal medicine residency program.



TMH, which already offers a residency in family medicine for medical school graduates, announced its formal partnership with FSU in August. FSU is the institutional sponsor for the new program — the first new residency that the 10-year-old College of Medicine will sponsor.

The Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education, the agency that oversees post-medical school training in the United States, requires a formal application by Jan. 21 if FSU and TMH want to be up and running by June 2012.

Their application is already in, said Dr. Dean Watson, chief medical officer at TMH and the interim director of the proposed internal medicine residency. Watson's specialty is internal medicine. ACGME will visit Tallahassee to review the proposed program sometime in spring 2011.

"We fit the mold for what the country is looking for in terms of increasing the number of primary care slots," Watson said. "Now it's just a watch and wait game."

FSU-TMH have requested 36 residency slots and are hoping to accept eight first-year internal medicine residents in 2012 and possibly several second-year doctors eager to transfer to Tallahassee.

Dr. Alma Littles, senior associate dean for medical education and academic affairs at FSU's medical school, expects that there will be opportunities for the two residency programs at TMH to work together.

"What it means for our students is that we will now have more opportunities for them to complete their training in Florida, which means we will in all likelihood have more primary care physicians in our state. It's

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a win, win, win for all of us," Littles said.

FSU sponsors two residency programs — obstetrics-gynecology and pediatrics — at Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola. They were already established when FSU became their institutional sponsor.

Mark O'Bryant, TMH's CEO, is eager to see the new residency program come to fruition.

"It's huge — not just because it's an expansion and strengthening of the relationship between us and the College of Medicine, which is critically important. This will allow us to provide a better level of care in our community," O'Bryant said. "The internal medicine program is vital for our future, our medical health care future."

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