

Sarasota Memorial Hospital and FSU create medical residency program

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Florida State University and Sarasota Memorial Hospital have partnered to create the area's first internal medicine residency.

The residency program, which will begin as early as 2017, will accept 10 doctors per year to train with physicians at Sarasota Memorial, and will be the only allopathic, or medical doctor, residency program between St. Petersburg and Fort Myers.



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Sarasota Memorial Hospital.

The residency program will be based at Sarasota Memorial Hospital and the Florida State University College of Medicine will be its institutional sponsor.

The effort will also be the first step in Sarasota Memorial's long-term effort to ultimately become a teaching hospital.

Several other local hospitals, including Manatee Memorial Hospital in Bradenton, have osteopathic, or doctor of osteopathy, residencies. Osteopathic doctors are trained to focus on the muscle and skeletal system to diagnose health problems, whereas medical doctors tend to focus on symptoms to diagnose illness.

Officials hope the residency program will train and retain the next generation of physicians in Southwest Florida. According to a recent statewide report on the coming doctor shortage, Southwest Florida needs an additional 263 family and general practice physicians by 2025 to keep pace with the region's growing population and physician retirements.

"Without more residency programs, the physician shortage that Florida is experiencing will only worsen as our population swells and our existing physician work force retires," said Dr. Steve Taylor, chief medical operations officer for Sarasota Memorial, in a statement.

Not only does Florida need more physicians in the future, but it needs more residency slots to train those physicians, a 2010 survey found. According to a report in the journal *Health Affairs*, Florida ranked 42nd in the nation for the number of residency slots available in the state.

Another recent study showed that of the physicians who completed their residencies in Florida, about 80 percent stayed in the state to continue their practice after their residency ended.

But currently, about two-thirds of all doctors who graduate from Florida medical schools leave the state to complete their residencies, and rarely return to Florida.

Adding more medical residency opportunities also is a legislative priority this year. The Florida Senate and House budgets both included funding for additional medical

residency slots.

The new program in Sarasota will be the seventh residency program in the state sponsored by the Florida State University College of Medicine, including a residency program at Lee Memorial in Fort Myers.

To get the program going, Sarasota Memorial will hire a residency director and the program will have to be vetted and certified by the national accreditation council for graduate medical education. If the hospital's timeline holds, it could begin evaluating applications from physicians in 2016 and welcome the first class by 2017.

Once certified, physicians from across country will be matched to the hospital for the residency program, not just doctors who received their degree from FSU.

“This new internal medicine residency program is a significant part of the commitment to producing future physicians for Sarasota and this entire region,” said Dr. John P. Fogarty, dean of the FSU College of Medicine.

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