

TMH residency program is doing its part

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Some things really do work out as planned. Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare and Florida State University's College of Medicine are working well together on two residency programs, both aimed at keeping new doctors practicing in this area.

FSU's medical school was founded a decade ago on the premise that it would focus on rural and medically underserved areas such as those in North Florida. It is not an easy mission to fulfill, yet residency programs are known to be a big factor in where a physician decides to settle.

Last week's announcement that 10 of 11 graduates in the family medicine residency program will begin their careers in North Florida speaks very well of that residency program.

And it also bodes well for a second collaboration between TMH and FSU in establishing a residency in internal medicine, which is expected to earn accreditation later this year and accept next spring's medical school graduates.

Last August, the TMH family medicine residency program graduated 11 doctors, with five staying in Tallahassee, with two others staying in the state.

Three-year residency programs help TMH provide a better level of health care for our community, as TMH CEO Mark O'Bryant has pointed out.

Beyond that, they are important because Florida has about half as many physicians as it needs given the population. It is part of a national shortage of physicians — but worse here than in most states. It means millions of Americans, especially in underserved areas, find it difficult to get an appointment or access to emergency care, and millions more are getting abbreviated visits with their doctors.

In-state residencies are too limited given the increasing number of students graduating from Florida's nine medical schools. Fewer than 40 percent of medical students are placed in Florida residencies.

It is regressive for Florida to pay for the medical education of the great number of doctors who are likely to practice in other states. More than two-thirds of this year's graduates went out of state for their residencies.

Read more: [Physician shortage | tallahassee.com | Tallahassee Democrat](http://www.tallahassee.com/article/20110628/OPINION01/106280304/Physician-shortage#ixzz1QZ5MXToD)
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