

# Training for tomorrow

## 'Pensacola's Medical School' helps meet demand

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Geami Britt, center, shadows Dr. Kenneth Long, right, at Tiger Point Family Medicine during her rotation as a third year medical student at FSU's College of Medicine.



Dr. Paul McLeod is a prognosticator, not of weather but of a different kind of storm that's looming on the horizon: one of health care.

He told the members of the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce at a recent meeting that what we're facing is a "Perfect Storm" reminiscent of the event that prompted the 1997 book and 2000 film.

Dr. McLeod warns of a looming convergence of an inadequate supply and unprecedented demand for health care services.

Fortunately, Dr. McLeod is in a position to make a positive impact on this scenario as Senior Associate Dean for Regional Campuses at the Florida State University College of Medicine in Pensacola.

The unassuming building on University Parkway belies the impact the program made for the past 10 years. Instead of focusing efforts on training in a university hospital setting, the FSU model places students in rotation with local doctors. The third- and fourth-year students work with actual doctors in their offices, seeing actual patients on six-week rotations as well as assisting in surgery and other specialties. Dr. McLeod said he is beginning to see some of the doctors return to our area after completing their residencies.

Geami Britt, a third-year medical student, recently began her rotation at Sacred Heart Medical Group-Tiger Point.

"I see a broad range of various things and I'm learning a lot," Britt said, adding that the doctors are eager to share their knowledge.

Dr. Kenneth Long enjoys interacting with the two to three students assigned each year to follow him, Dr. Laenger and Dr. Hawkins, getting each doctor's unique perspectives.

The FSU College of Medicine is celebrating its 10th year in Pensacola. It is located on University Parkway.

"These third years are very anxious to learn," Dr. Long said. "The only way these students learn is if a patient allows them to see them."



Dr. McLeod

Dr. McLeod says that the limiting factor for provision of health care in the near future will be services directly provided by physicians. The most critical "shortage" area will be in primary care since these physicians play such a crucial role in the value-based care that will make up the core of successful accountable care organizations.

Dr. Long said he is seeing more and more doctors retire due to new demand for electronic health care records, taking time away from patient care.

Britt said she sees the trends and is considering a career in gerontology to help meet the health care demands of aging baby boomers.

Dr. McLeod estimates that 80 million boomers will enter the Medicare program over the next few years, bringing chronic diseases such as arthritis, diabetes and dementia. Providers will struggle to treat this population but it will not be possible within the confines of the current system.

Additionally, the affordable care act will provide health care to a previously underserved population, creating a lot of new patients.

"Both of these populations will enter the system at a time that puts incentives in place for value. Wellness, prevention and aggressive outpatient treatment of chronic disease will be required to meet the quality standards and reduce avoidable hospital admissions," Dr. McLeod said.

