

# Winter Haven Residency Program Welcomes First Residents

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CLEARWATER, Fla., Oct. 28, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- When BayCare's Winter Haven Hospital conducted Community Health Needs Assessment surveys in the Winter Haven community, it found that its citizens struggle with access to health care.

From there, the Winter Haven Hospital Foundation, along with several community partners, commissioned an extensive feasibility study to determine if a graduate medical education program in Polk County would help improve primary care access.

When it was determined that it would be beneficial, the hospital took the first step in 2017 by contracting with a mission-aligned academic partner. Since then, many milestones have taken place in order for the Florida State University College of Medicine Family Medicine Residency at BayCare Health System in Winter Haven, Florida to welcome the inaugural residents this summer.

Residents are physicians who have completed medical school and are undergoing additional training for a specialty. Residents seek a graduate medical education program that is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education; and after completion of a qualifying residency program, physicians are eligible to take an exam to become board-certified in the program specialty.

The first six residents of the Winter Haven program – Dr. Marvin Dieujuste, from Fort Lauderdale; Dr. Brian Greene, from Reno, NV; Dr. Feisal Hamam, from Paterson, N.J.; Dr. Trevor Owens from Cocoa; Dr. Ravi Patel from Bonifay and Dr. Dianna Pham, who was raised in Winter Haven – are learning more about the family medicine specialty during a three-year stint.

The curriculum offers a learning environment across several settings, including hospital, ambulatory, emergency, home care and long-term care, and various specialty rotations. The rotations include training with community physicians specializing in pediatrics, behavioral health, cardiology, geriatrics, dermatology, gynecology, obstetrics, general surgery, orthopedics, nephrology, urology and pulmonology – all things expected of a family medicine physician.

The physicians also see patients at the BayCare Medical Group Family Health Center, which opened in 2019. Here, they work closely with faculty primary care physicians, a pharmacist and mental health specialists.

Pham was especially excited to begin her studies. As someone who grew up in Winter Haven, she looks forward to serving the community.

"I never thought there would be a residency program in my hometown," she said. "To be able to return feels good, because now you're contributing back to the place where you've lived your life."

Currently, the residents are getting to know each other, and they will learn together as well. The specialty of family medicine requires that the physicians know a lot about an array of conditions. Founding Program Director Nathan Falk, MD, MBA, FAAFP, said that they will rotate together to various units as they do this and then come together at the end of the day to trade notes.

"We wanted people with strong medical knowledge, but they also need to have a passion for caring for the whole person. They also have to be a good team player who is able to interact well with everyone, from pharmacists to nurses and everyone on the patient journey," said Falk.

Winter Haven Hospital signed the contract with Florida State College of Medicine on December 12, 2017 to establish and operate the residency program with the mission-based purpose to be responsive to community needs. From there, Winter Haven Hospital set forth to building a training site and FSU to hire a program director to develop the curriculum, hire faculty and achieve accreditation. In 2018, Dr. Falk was named the founding program director and in mid-2019, the training site construction was completed. Shortly after, faculty physicians were hired and started building a patient clientele at the training site, which opened formally as BayCare Medical Group Family Health Center at 1201 First St. South in Winter Haven.

Today, the Family Health Center employs two full-time primary care physicians and a clinical pharmacist who also serve as FSU faculty. The Center accepts appointments for patients from newborn to adult age for wellness visits, plus back-to-school and sports physicals, non-operative orthopedic care, sports medicine, women's health (including prenatal care and obstetrics) and pharmacy consultations.

The search for the inaugural residents began in the Fall of 2019, after the program received accreditation. The residency program received hundreds of applications and interviewed nearly 75 applicants.

For medical school graduates, the residency application process begins in the fall during the final year of school when they apply to the programs of their choice. Interviews are held, then in February, both applicants and residency programs rank each other in order of preference and submit the preference lists to the National Residency Match Program. NRMP processes the lists using a computerized mathematical algorithm to match applicants with programs. On "Match Day," the third Friday of every March, residents and faculty are notified of their matches.

After this year's Match Day, the Winter Haven residency program met their residents virtually due to the pandemic. Each year, more residents will join the program to begin their three-year program. Drs. Dieujuste, Greene, Hamam, Owens, Patel and Pham will complete their training in 2023.

Meanwhile, Winter Haven Hospital has a goal to retain at least half of their residents to practice in Polk County after program completion, and therefore contributing to improving access to health care for the community.

SOURCE BayCare