County Asks Governor's Help With

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Responding to a citizen’s request, the Jefferson County Commission last week adopted a resolution asking the Governor’s office to intervene with one of the state agencies on behalf of the Jefferson County Kennel Club (JCKC)

Luther Pickles specifically asked the commission to request that Governor Rick Scott’s office intervene with the Division of Pari-Mutual Wagering, Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulations (FDOBPR), and allow JCKC to remain inactive through the 2014-15 racing season, which starts July 1.

The resolution asks that JCKC be allowed to remain inactive during the cited period without penalty or disruption of the processing of its licensing application in future. It underscores the Governor’s authority to assist companies during difficult economic times and further reminds him of his platform to reduce regulations.

The resolution argues that the state statutes and regulations that govern race tracks have become burdensome to the point of making it infeasible to operate pari-mutuel wagering at JCKC.

Busload Of FSU Med Students To Visit Here

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About 40 first-year medical students from the FSU College of Medicine are scheduled to spend the better part of the day in Monticello on Friday, May 30, their aim to visit with local healthcare providers, interact with community members, and learn about rural healthcare in general.

Andrée Aubrey, director of the FSU Area Health Education Center (AHEC), explained that the trip is intended to introduce the first-year medical students to rural communities in the area and possibly foster an interest in some of them one day practicing in such settings.

“Part of our mission is to educate and develop primary care physicians who will one day work in rural communities,” Aubrey said, adding that a large part of the College’s training is designed to build relationships between the students and underserved populations.

As such, The Rural Learning Experience, as these introductory annual excursions are called, provides an opportunity for med students and community members from rural counties to interact and get to know each other one-on-one.

The itinerary on Friday calls for the students to begin their visit at the Jefferson County Health Department, where they will hear a presentation from Administrator Kim Allbritton at 9 a.m., followed by a tour of the facility. At 10 a.m., the students travel to the Chamber of Commerce, where they will hear a talk by the Big Bend Hospice interdisciplinary team, followed by an informal walk-about of the town between 11:30 a.m. and 12:10 p.m.

At 12:15, the group convenes at the First United Methodist Church on W. Walnut Street, where they will enjoy a catered lunch at Tupelo Café and Bakery Restaurant, hear introductory remarks from State Representative Halsey Beshears and participate in a panel discussion on healthcare.

The members of the panel include Ron Hartsfield MD, assistant dean for the Tallahassee regional campus; Donna Hagan, executive director of the Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison and Taylor counties, Inc; Gladys Roann, RN and school nurse; and Joan Watson, nursing home administrator at the Cross Landing Health and Rehabilitation Center.

“We want the panel to talk to the students about how they address all the needs of the community, not just the medical problems,” Aubrey said. “We want the students to see the collaborative as well as the interdisciplinary relationships.”

At 1:30 p.m. the group takes a bus tour of the scenic and historic sites in Jefferson County. And from 2:15 to 3:30 p.m., they engage in a “getting to know you” session.

Local Students Page 3.

Photo Courtesy of FSU College of Medicine
Paul Henry and Troy

continued from page 1

the College’s alumni since the first graduating class of 2005 are engaged in one of the primary-care specialties; most of those practicing in Florida are in primary care; “and a good percentage of those are in a rural area, where recruiting physicians can be a challenge.”

All told, 18 percent — or 20 of the 193 current practicing physicians out of the 680 alumni since the first graduating class of 2005 — are practicing in rural, medically underserved areas of Florida; and 37 of the alumni physicians are located in the Panhandle, an area extending from Perry to Pensacola.

A breakdown of the College’s 483 medical students — as of Oct. 15, 2013 — shows that 183 are minorities (124 of these minorities underrepresented in medicine), 225 are females, and 250 are males.

For the 120 first-year students in the Class of 2017, more than half, or 55 percent, are women; 17 percent are African-American or African-Caribbean; 11 percent are Hispanic; and nine percent are Asian or Pacific Islander.

Eight percent come from rural counties, and a third come from the Florida Panhandle.

Noteworthy also is the College’s nearly unique Bridge Program, a 12-month master’s program designed to provide another entrance into medical school for students from minority and rural backgrounds who otherwise might not qualify because of their low scores on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT).

It turns out that MCAT scores aren’t necessarily an accurate predictor of performance, as the success of students in the school’s Bridge Program has demonstrated, per the College. More than simply looking at test scores of applicants, the Bridge Program assesses a student’s overall application and considers such factors as personality dedication, work ethic and ability to overcome obstacles.

The program accepts 10 to 15 students annually, and on average, these students’ graduation rates and timeframes are relatively equal to all medical students, according to the College.

The College’s STRIDE program is also reportedly drawing national attention. An acronym for Science Students Together Reaching Instructional Diversity and Excellence, the program is designed “to identify and prepare more qualified medical school candidates from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented both in M.D. programs and in the physician workforce.”

“The goal,” according to the College, “is to produce more of the physicians who are most likely to make caring for Florida’s underserved patients a priority in their medical practice. It has been demonstrated that physicians who come from underserved backgrounds are far more likely to choose that patient population as a career focus.”