

Medical Schools Critical to Graduate Medical Education in Florida

The Council of Florida Medical School Deans (Council of Deans) urges the Florida Legislature to continue to support enhanced funding for graduate medical education (GME) residency positions. GME funding produces one of the highest and most direct returns on investment that Florida can make to assure an adequate supply of physicians in Florida. State policies regarding GME should recognize the critical roles that both hospitals and medical schools play in meeting the state's health care workforce needs.

As Florida continues to address its physician workforce needs, it is imperative that medical schools' focal role in GME is recognized. Medical schools incur significant costs developing, maintaining, and coordinating GME programs in affiliation with their hospital partners. However, neither Medicare GME funding nor Medicaid GME funding helps to defray medical school GME costs because Medicare and Medicaid GME funding is paid directly to hospitals. Hospitals are currently supporting many GME positions above the funding cap imposed by the federal government. Financial pressures on hospitals affect their ability to further expand, and often determine what types of residency programs are developed by hospitals, which desire to support or maximize their return on investment (ROI).

There are many nuances on how GME is delivered at each of the medical schools, as well as in hospitals and non-hospital facilities throughout Florida. Any legislative or policy decisions should reflect the heterogeneity of the GME landscape.

There are innovative activities conducted by Florida's medical schools that are currently creating new GME programs where none have existed in the past.

- The Florida Atlantic University (FAU) sponsored consortium of five hospitals in Palm Beach County coming together to create multiple residencies that pool the patient populations and resources of the hospitals and the medical school.
- The use of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) for new residencies, such as the psychiatry residency program at Florida International University (FIU).
- Curriculum and teaching innovations to prepare residents for the future delivery system, such as the new residency at Holy Cross Hospital sponsored by the University of Miami (UM).
- Nova Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (NSU) collaborates with the Florida Department of Health and Florida Department of Corrections in the education of osteopathic medical students, residents and fellows.
- The University of Central Florida (UCF) sponsored consortium of HCA and Veterans' Affairs hospitals to include up to 550 GME positions by the year 2020.
- The Florida State University College of Medicine has collaborated with several of its network of community hospitals to develop new residency programs in primary care specialties over the past five years. This includes programs at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital (Tallahassee), Lee Memorial Health Systems (Ft. Myers) and Sarasota Memorial Hospital (Sarasota).

The Council of Deans applauds the Florida Legislature and Governor's Office for recognizing the importance of GME in Florida. The deans urge policymakers to continue such recognition with policies that consider the heterogeneity of the GME landscape and that include both hospital and medical school providers.