

University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

News

Miller School and Holy Cross Hospital Launch Internal Medicine Residency Program

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The Miller School of Medicine and Holy Cross Hospital in Fort Lauderdale are expanding their education partnership to create 42 new residency slots in internal medicine, which will be phased in over three years. The program will provide Miller School graduates and residents with additional training opportunities, and it will enable Holy Cross to make the transition to an academic teaching hospital providing a higher level of patient care.

“We have been education partners with Holy Cross for several years,” said Joan St. Onge, M.D., associate professor of clinical medicine and Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education, who will manage the Miller School’s side of the partnership. “Our students in the M.D./M.P.H. program work with physicians there during their third-year clerkships.

“This new partnership is the outgrowth of conversations with Holy Cross about the hospital launching a graduate education program in internal medicine. The Miller School will be the sponsoring institution, and plans to employ the residents who train there. From our perspective, it will serve two purposes: First, having our residents at Holy Cross will provide a wonderful learning environment for our students. Second, it will give us the opportunity to expand the Miller School’s educational involvement in the South Florida region.”

The program received notice of accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education on September 22. Program leaders are now launching a campaign to recruit top candidates from medical schools across the country. Applications for the program, which begins on July 1, 2015, may be submitted through the Electronic Residency Application Service starting October 1.

The program will provide categorical positions for 12 residents each year for three years. The remaining six positions will be one-year preliminary medicine internships leading to specialty residencies.

“This is an excellent addition to our graduate medical education mission,” said Daniel M. Lichtstein, M.D., professor of medicine and Regional Dean for Medical Education. “Holy Cross is an outstanding hospital and its leadership and medical staff are dedicated to the delivery of the highest level of medical care. Over the past several years, our medical students have gained excellent clinical experience at Holy Cross, and the addition of this residency will only enhance that. We look forward to a long and highly productive partnership.”

The Holy Cross partnership will be different from many internal medicine residencies in that it will involve residents spending a large amount of time in the ambulatory setting, St. Onge said. “Residents will not only be working at Holy Cross, but also at Broward



Holy Cross Hospital

Community and Family Health Centers, which serve the underinsured and uninsured, and the Light of the World Clinic, which provides free essential healthcare and preventive medical services to disadvantaged residents.”

The curriculum will be structured on a 4:2 scheduling system, wherein residents rotate through four weeks of an inpatient or elective rotation, followed by two weeks of dedicated ambulatory time. This allows separation of inpatient and outpatient duties, which has been shown to improve educational experiences and enhance the perception of a team for delivery of care.

During the four-week blocks, residents will rotate through general medicine in patient services, the intensive care unit, emergency medicine and electives. In general medicine and intensive care, residents will learn in interdisciplinary teams under the supervision of an attending physician, which will expand their ability to function in a medical team.

There will be early exposure to dedicated rotations in both quality and research, using many of the Miller School’s resources, which will cultivate an understanding of high-value care, patient safety and systems improvement. Residents will also gain experience in an accountable care organization and a patient-centered medical home, where they will work with faculty and staff to improve quality metrics.

Alternating with the four-week rotations will be two-week blocks dedicated to ambulatory experiences. These two weeks will include continuity clinics in a federally qualified health center and a recognized patient-centered medical home. This will be supplemented by an additional continuity site in either a private medical group that is also a part of an accountable care organization, or a free clinic. The experience will provide additional cultural competency, as well as an understanding of the administration, delivery of care and quality improvement.

The curriculum also fosters the skills needed to perform outpatient procedures and manage chronic conditions. During the first year, interns will spend time in non-medicine specialties as part of their ambulatory blocks. Working with dermatologists, psychiatrists and psychologists, orthopedic specialists, urologists and gynecologists, they will gain the skills necessary to diagnose and manage many common patient complaints.

During the second year, residents will have a longitudinal experience in rheumatology, endocrinology, HIV, nephrology and cardiology clinics, allowing them to gain the skills necessary to follow patients with chronic conditions independently. This will allow a better understanding of when and how to interact with other specialists and eventually lead the patient care team.

In the final year, residents will again be involved in a quality and safety experience, as well as administration of an accountable care organization and healthcare policy.

“We are very excited about this new residency program, and we hope and expect that it will lead to more new programs in a number of additional specialties,” said Laurence B. Gardner, M.D., Miller Professor of Medicine and Executive Dean for Education and Policy. “The program is important not only for our graduating medical students, but also for the enhancement in patient care that graduate medical education brings to the healthcare environment.”

Indeed, said St. Onge, the internal medicine residency program is envisioned as the first of several at Holy Cross. Others under discussion are residencies in surgery, psychiatry and

emergency medicine.

“The partnership is a win-win for everybody,” she said. “These programs will begin to address the serious shortage of residency positions in South Florida, giving more Miller School graduates who wish to remain here the opportunity to do so. The programs will also raise the quality of care in the community, and they present a great opportunity for our alumni to teach our students and residents.”

Holy Cross is a full-service, non-profit Catholic hospital that is a member of CHE Trinity Health. Open since 1955, it has 559 beds and more than 600 physicians on staff representing more than 40 specialties, and more than 3,000 employees. Many of its physicians are University of Miami alumni, as either Miller School or residency graduates.

“We are proud of the quality of care we already provide, but this partnership will take us to a new level of medical care within the hospital and the whole community,” said Kenneth Homer, M.D., Chief Medical Officer at Holy Cross Hospital and Core Faculty for the residency program. “Working with newly graduated physicians will enable our medical staff to maintain a very progressive, cutting-edge focus and encourage even more involvement in medical discoveries. Our patients will also be seen by more than one physician, and their cases will be discussed in a team setting, allowing for delivery of multidisciplinary care. We foresee this higher level of care attracting more patients to our hospital and advancing the medical care available in South Florida.”