

# **SOUTHWESTERN NEWS**

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## **UT SOUTHWESTERN TRAINS FAMILY PHYSICIANS FOR TEXAS IN NEW PARKLAND RESIDENCY PROGRAM**

**DALLAS – Jan. 21, 1997 –** Finding enough primary care physicians to take care of all the citizens of Texas is a major challenge.

To meet the challenge, UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas has added it's sixth family practice training program with Parkland Health & Hospital System.

Funding for the new residency program comes from the federal government, Parkland and the state. Texas legislators appropriated funds to educate primary care physicians in 1995. This year the legislature again will consider initiatives to encourage more primary care providers for Texas.

The Parkland family practice program, which admitted its first physicians for training in July, is the newest of UT Southwestern's family practice training sites. Besides the Parkland program, there are family medicine residency programs at St. Paul Medical Center, Charlton Methodist Hospital and John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth. John Peter Smith is one of the largest training programs for family physicians in the United States. Other UT Southwestern-affiliated programs are located in Waco and Wichita Falls.

"Around 120 Texas counties are classified as "medically underserved," and a large number have no physician at all. However, with regard to family physicians, nearly every area is underserved," said Dr. Shelley P. Roaten, chairman of family practice and community medicine at UT Southwestern. "Many communities need family doctors, but portions of Dallas and Fort Worth have shortages, too. And there's never enough medical care in minority areas."

UT Southwestern has long recognized the need for educating family physicians and encouraging them to remain in Texas when they begin their private practice. Its program is among the nation's top networks in terms of numbers of family physicians trained. And many of its residents remain in the state to practice medicine.

Dr. Kern Wildenthal, UT Southwestern president, said that "strong family practice

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residency programs, like ours at UT Southwestern, are an essential component in providing quality medical care for all Texans. Research shows that a major factor in a young physician's decision about where he or she will practice medicine is where that physician was trained."

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board reports seven out of 10 Texas family practice residents settle within 100 miles of their training sites after completing training.

Dr. Robert Frey, director of the new Parkland residency program and assistant professor of family practice and community medicine, said he believes the close relationship between the medical center and Parkland will offer an unparalleled opportunity for young physicians.

"The Parkland Family Practice Residency program will bring together the strengths of one of the greatest academic medical schools in the world and one of the most outstanding major hospitals in educating family practice physicians. Our job is to combine these strengths to become an outstanding teaching program in primary care," he said.

The new program, which opened its doors with eight residents and five faculty members, is set up for six new family medicine trainees each year for three years. The addition of the Parkland residents brings this year's total of UT Southwestern family practice residents to about 170, said Dr. John Richmond, assistant professor of family practice and associate director of the new residency program.

The clinic itself, where program faculty can treat their private patients, including UT Southwestern and Parkland employees, is located in the Clinical Services Building at 6303 Harry Hines Blvd.

Residents, four of whom are graduates of UT Southwestern, will be assigned as primary care physicians for individual patients and families for the duration of their training. The first year emphasizes hospital care. Increasingly each young physician will spend more time with his or her private patients. During the training, residents will also spend time in Parkland's Community-Oriented Primary Care (COPC) clinics, located throughout Dallas

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County.

Dr. Michael Tolle, a UT Southwestern graduate, said he is excited about the opportunity to train for family medicine at Parkland.

"As a medical student, I was always impressed with the work in Parkland and the fine faculty at UT Southwestern. When I met Dr. Frey and he told me about the new program, I knew this was right for me," Tolle said.

Tolle said his first-year training in another medical specialty was outstanding. Because of a year he spent in the Philippines and a desire to return, he realized that a family practice program with more emphasis on treating women and children would be better for his goals.

Other new Parkland family practice residents say they were drawn to the opportunity to train at Parkland with UT Southwestern faculty as a basis for setting up either an urban or rural practice.

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