

# News

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\*\*\*\* Dr. Bill Ross named chairman  
of Family Practice

DALLAS--"You can do it in the back end of a pickup truck under a sycamore tree," Dr. Bill Ross says of his specialty.

Of course, that setting may not be ideal, but the point is a physician can practice family medicine just about anywhere. And as the new chairman of Family Practice and Community Medicine at Southwestern Medical School, Ross wants to increase student interest in family practice as a specialty.

He hopes to accomplish this by strengthening the family practice preceptorship program and giving more support to affiliated residency programs in the state. The preceptorship program exposes students to physicians in family practices throughout the state.

"We recognized 10 years ago this was one way to recruit in schools with no programs on campus," Ross says.

The Family Practice/Student Association at Southwestern introduces students to career possibilities as small town physicians. This group was one reason why 28 graduating seniors are planning family practice residencies. (Four students who didn't match other programs will also be going into family practice.)

"It is becoming a more popular residency. The public is demanding it, that's the reason the legislature continues to fund the programs, even in large urban areas. I could place 50 physicians in Dallas County right now. There just aren't that many openings in surgery and OB/Gyn," says Ross.

Affiliated residency programs now exist at St. Paul Hospital, Methodist Hospitals of Dallas, John Peter Smith, Hendrick Memorial in Abilene and North Central Texas Medical Foundation in Wichita Falls. About 70 percent of physicians trained in the satellite programs establish practice in towns of 10,000 or less.

"When I came here, there was only one program. Now there are four additional programs," Ross says. "By 1985, 38 family physicians will graduate each year from these programs."

Ross had "a 22-year love affair" with his private family practice in San Benito in the Rio Grande Valley before joining the faculty here in 1977. "If they (medical students) find out how much fun it is working in a small town, they'll have to pass a law to keep 'em from going there," he says.

Effective March 1, he became chairman of the department after serving as chairman of the Division of Family Practice. Ross had been acting chairman following the Nov. 27 death of former chairman, Dr. Winfrey Goldman.

(over)



"I have a big pair of shoes to fill," Ross says. "Goldman was an outstanding chairman."

Yet Ross's record speaks for itself. He just completed a term as president-elect of the Texas Medical Association. He chaired the TMA Council on Medical Education from 1975 to 1980. He serves on the Graduate Medical Education advisory committee of the American Medical Association and is a delegate to the American Hospital Association and to the AMA. He is a frequent speaker throughout the country.

He was recently appointed by Gov. Mark White to the Task Force on Indigent Care and is chairman of an ad hoc committee on medical manpower distribution in Texas. By determining who the indigent are and where they live, the task force can apply data gained from studying physician distribution.

"In Texas we are still licensing three times as many as we graduate," he says.

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