



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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PAFP and Dept. of Health Embark on Grant Program to Strengthen Family Medicine in Pennsylvania

Bi-partisan appropriation promotes Family Medicine workforce efforts

(Wyomissing, PA, February 19, 2025) – In 2024, the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP) was awarded record-level funding by the Commonwealth to advance family physician workforce development programs, focusing on increasing the family physician pipeline, as well as recruitment and retention efforts. Partnering with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), the PAFP has developed five strategic, groundbreaking family medicine recruitment and retention projects to add to its existing Family Medicine Residency Expansion Program, with an emphasis on medical school engagement to grow production of family medicine physicians.

In December of 2021, The Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) of the Pennsylvania General Assembly issued their report on [Medical School Impact on Primary Care Physician Shortage](#) in the Commonwealth. The report studied efforts within medical schools to promote student choice in primary care, include primary care experience in the curriculum, and accurately monitor and report graduate retention in primary care. The report included information about students, ongoing programs, and new initiatives gathered during meetings with the nine medical schools then operating in the Commonwealth.

“In response to this extensive Pennsylvania-specific report, the PAFP is expanding its grant to add engagement with the state's now 10 medical schools to strengthen connections between medical schools and family medicine, and support both new and ongoing family medicine initiatives,” PAFP President Theresa Metanchuk, DO, said. “PAFP will also

collaborate with other key stakeholders involved in primary care recruitment and retention.”

Two of the five recommendations made in the JSGC 2021 study on Medical School Impact on Primary Care Physician Shortage in PA focused on expanding primary care pipeline programs and overcoming cultural and financial barriers preventing medical schools from promoting primary care.

To that end, PAFP and DOH will offer funding to each medical college to incentivize new or expand existing programs designed to offer novel approaches that produce graduates who will enter primary care.

“High-quality primary care is the foundation of our nation’s health care system,” said Heather Beauparlant, DO, PAFP President-elect. “Increased investment in primary care is associated with higher quality care, better patient experience, fewer hospital and emergency room visits, and lower total cost of care.”

To better understand how much the Commonwealth invests in primary health care services, the PAFP and DOH will partner with Freedman HealthCare to conduct a study of public and commercial payers and provide primary care spending measurement and analysis, and primary care reimbursement analysis.

Other initiatives included in the grant program include financial support grants for medical students and residents to attend the American Academy of Family Physicians Annual National Conference; supplemental funding for the Primary Care Career Center, which connects healthcare professionals in PA with a network of mission-focused health centers across the state; and supplemental funding for the Primary Care Ambassador Program, a three-year program to support disadvantaged undergraduates at partnering colleges and universities in PA who have the interest, aptitude, commitment, and resilience to pursue a degree in medicine.

“The plans outlined above are unprecedented in the history of the PAFP,” said Dr. Metanchuk. “We are thrilled to partner with the Department of Health to advance the Family Medicine workforce in Pennsylvania and address health care access issues for all Pennsylvanians.”

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