

ATTRACTING PROVIDERS TO RURAL AREAS



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The Wright Rural Health Initiative (WRHI) is an organization that consists of several health care organizations

involved in educating health care professional students in a rural setting. Grand Lake Health System and Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine have taken the lead in making this educational opportunity possible. Rural America is facing a shortage of primary care physicians and health care providers. Almost a fourth of the US population lives in rural America but only about 10 percent of US physicians practice in rural communities.

Several years ago, one of our local physicians, Dr. Robert P Gill, recognized that our area of southwestern Ohio was going to face an increased shortage of primary care physicians due to the aging process. In the summer of 2013 that local physician spoke with Dean Parmelee M.D., associate dean for academic affairs at the Boonshoft School of Medicine. That conversation resulted in a collaborative effort now called the Wright Rural Health Initiative. Since that time we have had numerous students rotate for six week periods in Pediatrics and Family Medicine at both Grand Lake Health System and Mercer Health. We have had several primary care physicians donate their time to training the doctors of the future. They have the designation of Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine on the volunteer faculty at Boonshoft School of Medicine Wright State University.

Over the past three years this has evolved into a teaching tract for training health care professional students. It has been long recognized that when students have the opportunity to live and work in rural communities during their professional training, they are more likely to select

rural communities for professional practice. We have now moved into a new phase of training and have been fortunate to get grant monies to support on site training and housing at Wright State University Lake Campus for these students. We will be offering clinical opportunities for the students to train in Family Practice, Pediatrics and Surgery. Over the next year the number of students training with our doctors will increase. So do not be surprised if your doctor brings along a medical student to your next visit. This training is necessary to get the experience to be the doctor of the future. Hopefully they will stay and be **our** doctor of the future.



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