



Medical College of Georgia Encourages Students Toward Generalist Careers

Georgia Medical College, Augusta, Ga.

SUMMARY

The [Medical College of Georgia](#)—the largest medical school in southeastern U.S.—developed initiatives to increase to at least 50 percent the percentage of medical school graduates becoming generalist physicians.

This project was part of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) *Generalist Physician Initiative*, a national program that challenged schools of medicine to increase the supply of general internists, general pediatricians and family practitioners that they were training.

Key Results

The school of medicine accomplished the following during the grant period:

- Placed some 376 high school and college students, many from medically underserved regions of the state, in mentoring relationships with community primary care physicians.
- Integrated a new multidisciplinary course, Essentials of Clinical Medicine into the medical school curriculum.
- Revised basic science courses to more effectively reflect the information primary care physicians need.
- Increased community-based ambulatory training.
- Developed a mini-rotation in the residency program in managed care and interdisciplinary rotations in women's health, adolescent medicine, behavioral medicine and geriatrics.
- Enhanced loan forgiveness to generalists entering practices in selected communities.

Funding

RWJF provided four grants totaling \$2,639,822 from November 1992 to June 2000 to support this work.

THE PROJECT

The school of medicine developed projects in four areas:

- In order to increase the admissions of medical students seeking to become generalist physicians, the school of medicine placed some 376 high school and college students, many from medically underserved regions of the state, in mentoring relationships with community primary care physicians.
- In *Medical School Education*, it integrated a new multidisciplinary course, Essentials of Clinical Medicine into the medical school curriculum; altered its basic science courses to more effectively reflect the information primary care physicians need; and significantly increased community-based ambulatory training. Georgia's Area Health Education Centers (AHECs)¹ played a major role in recruitment and development of community-based sites to train medical students. Approximately 308 medical students were placed in these sites during the project.
- In *Residency Training*, the school of medicine developed a mini-rotation in managed care and interdisciplinary rotations in women's health, adolescent medicine, behavioral medicine and geriatrics.
- In *Practice Entry and Support*, the school of medicine enhanced loan forgiveness to generalists entering practices in selected communities; expanded medical student and resident education in community sites; developed a new AHEC region to provide educational support to generalist physicians in rural communities; and enhanced the use of the telemedicine program for patient care and continuing medical education.

RESULTS

After the school of medicine instituted these initiatives, 318 of its 522 medical school graduates—or 61 percent—chose a primary care residency.

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¹ **Area Health Education Centers (AHECs)**—a system, funded through a combination of state and federal funds, that strives to eliminate disparities in health and health care, especially in underserved communities, by providing community training for health professionals in these areas. Nationwide, there are more than 170 individual AHECs, and two-thirds to three-fourths of the medical schools in the United States benefit directly or indirectly by the services that are provided through the AHEC network.