

Rural Report

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Boonshoft
School of Medicine
WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

Wright Rural Medical Scholars

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**WRIGHT RURAL
MEDICAL SCHOLARS**

The Wright Rural Medical Scholars program is proud to be affiliated with the Wright State Area Health Education Center (AHEC). Wright State AHEC is funded by the Ohio legislature to address disparities in the health care workforce in rural and other underserved communities.

OUR MISSION: To develop and nurture physicians pursuing rural medical practice in Ohio.

WELCOME



Lori Martensen

In this issue of the *Rural Report*, we recognize and wish a heartfelt happy retirement to two of our earliest and greatest champions, Dr. Margaret Dunn, former Dean, Boonshoft School of Medicine and Kevin Harlan, President and CEO of Grand Lake Health System. It was under their vision and leadership that the Wright Rural Medical Scholars program was established and thrived. We have asked them to look back and share their memories on how and why the rural program was established, as well as to share their thoughts on the future of rural medicine and the rural physician workforce.

Sincerely,
Lori Martensen
Director, Wright Rural Medical Scholars

Q&A WITH DR. MARGARET DUNN



Dean Margaret Dunn

Q: What was your first reaction when approached by Grand Lake Health System about starting medical student rotations in the Lake Campus region?

A: What a wonderful opportunity for our medical students! From the very first conversation, I was impressed with what the Lake Campus communities had in place to support superb clinical experiences. Over time, the excellent medical education our students received and the quality of care delivered by our volunteer Lake Campus-area faculty became broadly recognized and appreciated by the entire Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM) faculty and staff.



Q: What role should a medical school play in guiding students to specialties or communities where physician shortages are most significant?

A: As a publicly supported medical school, BSOM has a fundamental duty to improve the health of the people of Ohio, which includes educating physicians from underserved Ohio communities, and encouraging all its graduates to serve those same communities. Trying to address areas of physician shortage by encouraging and supporting our graduates' practice in those areas is core to the medical school's mission. All public Ohio medical schools are regularly assessed at the state level in regard to their contribution to the Ohio physician workforce.

Q: What do you think is the key to having more BSOM alumni practicing in rural communities?

A: There are two key elements. The first: providing outstanding rural experiences for both medical students and resident physicians, is well under way. The second: reducing the cost of attendance for medical school, which will require additional investment at the state level, by clinical institutions, and communities.

During Dr. Dunn's time as dean of the Boonshoft School of Medicine...

90 Students completed 
145 Rural rotations 

HIGHLIGHT

It started with a phone call in 2014. Dr. Bob Gill, then the Chief Medical Officer for Grand Lake Physicians Practice in St. Marys, Ohio, called Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine Dean, Margaret Dunn, to discuss starting medical student rotations at Grand Lake Health System. There were challenges to overcome: students would need housing, the health system and the community were not accustomed to medical students, and no one knew if medical students would be willing to relocate for a rural clerkship. The Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM) and Grand Lake received funding from HealthPath of Ohio to start a rural medicine program, and what is now the Wright Rural Medical Scholars program, was born.



Dawn McNaughton, M.D.

Grand Lake physicians did not just precept students, they played an active role in growing the program. Grand Lake physicians recruited physicians from other health systems in the area to precept students. When Dr. Gill retired from patient care, he served on the BSOM Admissions Committee. The Grand Lake medical staff awards scholarships to two of its rotating students each year. Chief Medical Officer Dr. Dawn McNaughton serves as an advisor to BSOM, serving on the committees that established the Rural Track and the Three-Year Track. To date, Grand Lake physicians have precepted 45 students completing 70 clinical rotations in ear nose and throat (ENT), family medicine, general surgery, neurology, orthopedic surgery, pediatrics, and urology.

"I loved my rotations at Grand Lake! Everyone was so kind and welcoming to me. I truly felt like I was a part of the community. I am so thankful that I was able to learn alongside so many incredible physicians and staff!" Katie Lomeo, BSOM class of 2021.

*Thank you Grand
Lake Health System
for your support of
the Wright Rural
Medical Scholars
program!*

Q&A WITH KEVIN HARLAN



Kevin Harlan

Kevin Harlan, President and CEO of Grand Lake Health System (GLHS) since 2005, has announced his retirement for this September. Kevin has been an unwavering supporter of the Wright Rural Medical Scholars program, meeting with rotating students, encouraging physicians to precept students, and providing the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) dedicated time to work with the Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM). We took this opportunity to ask Kevin to reflect on Grand Lake's relationship with BSOM and to share his thoughts on the future.

Q: What impact has having medical students working with physicians had on GLHS?

A: Hosting students at Grand Lake Health System has not only positively impacted our providers and their practices, it has enhanced many of our departments that students rotate to. In fact, one of our very first students is now employed by our emergency room group, so the investment is paying off!

Q: Nationally, many rural health systems are closing, merging, and/or being purchased by larger systems. How have you kept GLHS independent and thriving?

A: Grand Lake Health System is blessed in having broad support from the communities we serve. Our independence is rooted in the culture of West Central Ohio; it is representative of the people. With this community support comes financial independence. We have always looked to provide those services which are not beyond our ability or expertise. Rural medicine is not being a level one trauma center with a helicopter; it is based in primary care, which is the vast majority of care provided in our country. We do collaborate and partner with other health systems whenever it benefits the communities we serve and to avoid a duplication of services.

Q: What do you think the future holds for rural health systems like GLHS? Will there still be small, independent systems in ten years?

A: I have been hearing since the early 1990s that rural facilities would vanish and be replaced by large health systems. Unfortunately, many rural facilities in Ohio and across the country have closed, but I do not see them disappearing in the next 10 years. I have been the CEO at GLHS for 15 years, and we have constantly grown and expanded our service lines and added new ones. Many of the surrounding rural health systems in West Central Ohio have done the same. The communities we serve want to be cared for close to home and receive care from people they know and trust. We at GLHS have a goal to be the finest rural health system in Ohio and it is an adventure that never ends.

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