

Tulane Receives \$1.1 Million Grant for Medical Home Curriculum Project

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Tulane University School of Medicine has received a \$1.1 million grant to train a new generation of primary care physicians. The five-year grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration will support the development of a patient-centered medical home curriculum within the school's Family Medicine clerkship and the Rural Immersion program, both administered by Tulane's Department of Family and Community Medicine.

"The aim of the Tulane Medical Home Curriculum Project is to prepare all of our medical students for this transformation that is coming in 21st century practice," says Dr. Richard Streiffer, professor of Family and Community Medicine.

The medical home model of delivering basic health services brings together several key elements: the benefits of primary care, a team-based approach to health care, an improved approach to chronic illnesses, an increased focus on the patient as consumer, and an increased use of information technology and communication. The project will incorporate primary care principles such as first contact, coordination of care, prevention, culturally competent care, and enhanced access to care into curricula and instructional materials.

Tulane's recently established Rural Immersion Program will participate in the new curriculum. The program seeks to encourage more students to become primary care physicians in rural Louisiana, where poor access to primary care has contributed to the state's low health rankings and high per capita health costs. The program provides students with opportunities to live and learn in rural communities, where they are mentored by community physicians and citizens and experience first-hand the special needs of vulnerable rural populations.

"The medical home approach is a fundamental shift away from the current disease-oriented medical delivery system with its uncoordinated array of primary care and specialist physicians," says Streiffer. "Numerous studies evaluating the patient-centered medical home model point to increasing evidence that this coordinated approach increases access to healthcare, improves quality, lowers costs and reduces

medical errors.”