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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Idaho State Journal

Pocatello, Idaho

Friday Dec. 8, 2017

by Shelbie Harris

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\$2.5 million gift from PMC to ISU could help solve doctor shortage problem

POCATELLO — The state of Idaho has a shortage of residencies for doctors who have recently graduated from medical school and are looking to start their career in medicine.

Currently, Idaho ranks 49th of 50 states in terms of physicians per capita, but on Tuesday the Idaho State Board of Education approved a proposal that's aimed at improving that position.

The board approved a plan that calls for \$5.2 million to be contributed in the first year of a 10-year plan totaling \$16 million. The plan would increase the number of residencies in the state from approximately 140 to about 350.

The proposal now needs the approval of Idaho Legislature and Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter before it's implemented.

Plus, the American Osteopathic Association's Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation has advanced the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine in its previously awarded, pre-accreditation status.

This announcement allows ICOM to start accepting applications and start recruiting the best and brightest to become part of the inaugural class of Idaho's first medical school.

And on Thursday, in an effort to continue training the next generation of doctors in the state of Idaho, Portneuf Medical Center announced an ongoing \$2.5 million annual gift to Idaho State University's family medicine residency program.

During a press conference hosted at ISU's Family Medicine Residency Clinic on Memorial Drive in Pocatello, the ongoing gift was announced in part because of PMC's ardent support of the institution for the past 10 years.

Recently the recipient of the ISU Foundation's most prestigious donor recognition, the Diamond Award, Kent Tingey, ISU vice president for advancement, said on Thursday that PMC has donated more than \$20 million to the university over the past decade.

"They've supported the PMC scholarships, which is an annual scholarship to ISU each year, Bengal Athletics, the rodeo team, the New Year's Eve Gala for the College of Arts and Letters and they have also supported the College of Technology and College of Business in scholarships," Tingey said. "PMC has probably been the single key to the success of our family practice residency program."

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He continued, "It's quite a thing to have the desire, will and generosity to invest in education. This is an investment to the students at ISU, and now hundreds of lives have been and will be blessed because of this kindness."

ISU President Arthur Vailas said there has been an ongoing debate regarding medical residencies across the nation. But throughout this debate, Vailas said PMC has provided an example that Idaho has the will and the capability to continue on its mission in providing accredited residency programs even beyond family medicine.

"Our track record definitely shows that this collaboration and commitment from PMC over the years has demonstrated not only the benefit to our community here, but also the benefit to rural Idaho," Vailas said.

The family medicine residency program at ISU is a three-year program that allows 21 medical school graduates to complete the residency at Portneuf Medical Center, according to Dr. William Woodhouse, ISU director of external relations for the family medicine residency program.

The program accepts seven new residents each year. Woodhouse said that where a medical school graduate completes their residency is the largest predictor of where they will eventually practice medicine.

"The mission of the ISU family medicine residency program is to equip family physicians with the attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to make a difference in rural and underserved communities," Woodhouse said. "The residency is naturally recognized for its training in hospital medicine, obstetrical care and quality processes. None of this would be possible without the continuing and longstanding support of our local hospital and medical community. PMC is an outstanding teaching hospital that contributes to family medicine training in countless ways."

Woodhouse said that over the years, PMC has financially contributed to the well-being of the family medicine residency program, adding they have provided conferencing facilities, sleep rooms, administrative support, access to quality and safety committees and IT support.

"Idaho continues to rank 49th in physicians per capita compared to all other states in the nation," Woodhouse said. "Throughout its existence, PMC has maintained its commitment to Idaho's underserved communities by helping address this problem. On behalf of the residency faculty and ISU, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge their ongoing support and say thanks."

PMC's continued display of financial support has been a dynamic of the relationship with ISU, because according to PMC CEO, Dan Ordyna, "Portneuf Loves ISU."

"We believe that this partnership is very unique in the United States," Ordyna said. "We have a fantastic university that is the leader in health sciences in the state of Idaho. They got the job done with getting a medical school and now they are the leaders in driving the healthcare training and residency training dialogue in the state of Idaho."

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He continued, “On behalf of Ardent, our board members, our medical staff and all other staff we are very appreciative of this partnership, we value it and we want it to continue.”

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