

The Call

The Governor's Primary Care Task Force was established in 2015 to develop solutions to the healthcare workforce shortage evident in South Dakota for many years. One of its recommendations was to start a rural Family Medicine residency in South Dakota. In the 2016 Department of Health budget, funding was included for development of such a program.

The Response

Several potential sites for this program were evaluated for local physician interest and clinical potential for teaching residents. This resulted in choosing Pierre (South Dakota's capital city, pop. 14,000) as the site, and the Center for Family Medicine (a joint venture by Avera and Sanford, South Dakota's two largest health systems) in Sioux Falls as the sponsoring institution. The residency continuity clinic would be at the local Sanford Clinic Pierre and Avera St. Mary's Hospital and Avera

Medical Group Pierre would be the sites for inpatient experiences and specialty rotations.



Map of South Dakota showing HPSA counties (blue) and the residency footprints of the programs in South Dakota; the Pierre rural program's is in red.

The implementation

ACGME accreditation was received in November 2017, with resident recruitment initiated promptly at that time. The first class matched in 2018.

The design is a 1-2 program: PGY 1 in Sioux Falls, PGY 2-3 in Pierre. The program funnels physicians to rural practice by recruiting students from rural-oriented medical schools, and those who grew up in rural areas. It leverages clinical opportunities at the

local South Dakota Women's Prison, moonlighting opportunities in smaller rural communities that abound in South Dakota, and teaching opportunities with local medical students participating of the USD Rural & Frontier Medicine program.

Lessons learned

- Identifying key stakeholders and developing partnerships is critical
- Anticipate communication issues
- Maintain flexibility
- Proactively develop the culture
- Intentionality in recruiting those initial pioneer residents is vital

Conclusions

If you have seen one rural residency, you have seen one rural residency. What looks simple at first usually becomes complicated. The residents make the program; let them help you succeed.

