

from the front page

WHERE THE DOCTORS ARE
A DAILY SUN SPECIAL REPORT



Interest and Demand Fuel a Growing College Population

Florida schools are expanding programs to help people live longer, stay active and enjoy life.

By EDDY DURYEA
Daily Sun Senior Writer

Florida’s education system is preparing for the 21st-century patient.

That means recognizing the importance of an aging population, said Kristen Schellhase, interim chair of the department of health professions at the University of Central Florida.

“There’s a huge interest in gerontology and healthy aging,” she said. “We’re seeing that older individuals are trying to stay as active as possible.”

This fall, UCF is bringing in two new faculty members who specialize in geriatric physical therapy.

The university is making strides since its MD program graduated its first class nearly three years ago.

“The field of medicine has been on our priority list for a long time,” Schellhase said. “Right now we’re limited by space, but we’re working to

accommodate that.”

UCF is hoping to expand to a downtown Orlando campus.

“We know there’s a huge need,” Schellhase said. “We do get a lot of requests from students for health profession programs that we don’t have.”

The most popular health-related degrees are psychology, health sciences, biomedical sciences and nursing, she said.

Communication is a big focus.

“We’re trying to foster interprofessional education,” Schellhase said. “Instead of training health-care providers separately, you train them together. You put the physical therapist and an aide in the same room so they can better understand each other and how they can both help the patient. Patient advocacy is number one.”

Keeping up with the volume of students is a constant challenge, said Dr. Sandy Quillen, director of the University of South Florida’s School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation.

“As physical therapists grow in popularity, there are becoming more and more vacancies at almost any institution,” he said.

More than 1,400 students vied for the 48 seats in the

physical therapy school for 2018, he added.

“People are living longer and they want to remain active and in their home longer,” he said. “This is generating a need for more care.”

He added that needs also are rising in other areas.

“We have many folks who have served in the military coming back home, and they have rehabilitation demands, too,” Quillen noted.

It’s also a good time to be a nurse, said Dr. Dianne Morrison-Beedy, senior associate vice president of USF Health and dean of the College of Nursing.

“People are living with chronic illnesses longer,” she said. “People are living with these complex health issues, and nurses help navigate them. Everybody needs a good nurse at some time in their life.”

In her 30 years as a registered nurse, Morrison-Beedy has seen a steady need.

“It has been one of our top health-related degrees for years,” she said.

People want to age in place, and nurse education has grown in complexity, she added.

“Training and education has become much more intense,” she said. “That’s a

huge change from years ago when you learned from a book and had very basic equipment. We are taking a much more comprehensive approach.”

At the state college level, nursing and in-home care are hot fields, said Eugene Jones, associate vice president of the baccalaureates and workforce programs at Lake-Sumter State College.

“They are definitely the most popular programs, although many students are looking to transfer to a four-year university,” he said.

The college’s location near The Villages and Orlando is ideal, and educators bear that in mind, Jones noted.

“We’re consulting with employers in the field,” he said. “We want to offer something that is sustainable and employable.”

Last spring, 89 students graduated from the college’s nursing program, its largest class yet.

And another 85 are on their way.

“We’re growing steadily each year,” Jones said. “I’m very optimistic.”

Eddy Duryea is a senior writer with *The Villages Daily Sun*. He can be reached at 753-1119, ext. 9062, or eddy.duryea@thevillagesmedia.com.



Bill Mitchell | Daily Sun

Certified Medical Assistant Wendy DeLand, left, talks with Villages Health Chair Dr. Elliot Sussman, center, and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Jeffrey Lowenkron recently. Both Sussman and Lowenkron say larger group practices like The Villages Health are atop the wish list for today’s medical students.

New Doctors Seeking Larger Groups Instead of Opening Practices

BY LARRY D. CROOM
Daily Sun Ombudsman

THE VILLAGES

What tops the wish list of newly minted doctors?

Strength in numbers, says Dr. Jeffrey Lowenkron, chief medical officer of The Villages Health.

“The balance that folks are looking for right now is really more of a balance of lifestyle,” he said of the advantages offered by large practices such as The Villages Health.

“So while they expect to be well-paid – and will be – what they don’t want to do is build their own practices from the ground up.”

Doctors in larger, established practices share business-side functions, staffing and scheduling that frees them up to focus on patients, he said.

“You’re not out on your own,” he added. “So you get to have a more predictable work life.”

That stability was a big reason why Dr. Kimberly Giovannelli joined The Villages Health’s Santa Barbara Care Center last year after finishing her residency at Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg.

“I don’t have to worry about the business side of it and how that’s run,” she said. “It’s all taken care of for me so I can just do my job.”

She added that “not taking overnight calls and doing all these crazy things in the hospital at all times” makes it easier to have a healthy family life.

Larger practices provide more collaboration, said Dr. Saul Rosenblum, medical director of the Santa Barbara Care Center.

“Each care center has that six-, seven-, eight-physician group where there’s such personal interactions,” he said. “We have large-group dynamics in terms of populations and demographics. But the small group keeps it kind of fun and intimate in terms of practicing medicine.”

And large practices are rich teaching grounds for medical students who want to see patient-centered care up close, said Dr. Michael Wald, a primary care physician at the Mulberry Grove Care Center.

“The reward of seeing these people is what keeps me going,” he said. “Patients in the hospital see a lot of different specialists. But when I come by to say hello, I’m their doctor and it’s a neat feeling.”

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FLORIDA LOTTERY

Saturday’s Results

Midday Drawing
Cash 3: 2-1-2
Play 4: 2-9-0-7
Evening Drawing
Cash 3: 2-6-1
Play 4: 0-1-7-6

Fantasy 5: 03-09-10-30-31
Lotto: 23-41-43-46-48-50
Xtra: x3
Powerball: 01-12-32-42-58
PB: 12 PP: x2

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