

Annual Rural Opportunities Career Fair Set for April 21st at Jackson Marriott

The third annual Rural Opportunities for Mississippi Physicians (ROMP) Career Fair is set for Saturday, April 21st at the Jackson Marriott. Held in conjunction with MAFP's Spring Conference, ROMP provides students, residents, and physicians the opportunity to network, meet potential employers, and investigate special incentives such as loan forgiveness and repayment options.

ROMP is specifically designed for primary care students and physicians who may be interested in relocating to rural or small town Mississippi communities. The Office of Mississippi Physician Workforce (OMPW) and the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) co-host the annual event.

Healthcare employers and representatives will have the opportunity to interact with current and rising physicians interested in working at hospitals, clinics, and agencies. Last year healthcare organizations showcased their businesses to more than 125 attendees. There will be one exhibit hall for the entire weekend, creating networking opportunities to three different groups of medical professionals. Organizations can click [here](#) to register.

Wendy Powell, Director of Marketing at Medical Assurance Company of Mississippi, said "As a company insuring physicians working and living in Mississippi, the ROMP Career Fair is a must for us. At MACM, we want to keep physicians in Mississippi for the benefit of all patients in the state. ROMP is a great opportunity to visit with medical students and residents (and our future insureds) and encourage them to practice in Mississippi."

Dr. John Mitchell, Director of the Office of Mississippi Workforce (OMPW) and founder of ROMP, was pleased with the enthusiastic turnout. "I'm glad to see this level of interest and involvement," he said. "Improving Mississippi's physician workforce is central to improving Mississippi's healthcare. ROMP provides great opportunities to make new contacts that will, in turn, help students and residents launch new careers in their future home communities.

The Rural Route

The demand for primary care physicians, especially those practicing in rural areas, is expected to sharply increase in the coming years. The rural population of those ages 55 to 75 is estimated to grow 30 percent between 2010 and 2020 due, in part, to retiring baby boomers migrating from urban areas. Nearly half of Mississippians live in rural areas where they experience many of the same health challenges as their metro counterparts.

Although still in last place at 185 physicians per 100,000 residents (compared to the national median of 251 per 100,000), the state fares better at retaining its

graduates. Mississippi ranks fourth in keeping medical school graduates and 13th in retaining residents

Craig Bullock, a fourth-year UMMC medical student and Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship recipient, plans to practice family medicine following graduation and residency.

A native of Blue Springs, he understands the high demand for rural physicians. "I came to love the idea of primary care through my involvement with MRPSP activities as an undergraduate at North East Mississippi Community College," said Bullock. "I was strongly considering a career in medicine and MRPSP gave me the means to turn my dreams into a reachable goal."

ROMP is the result of a collaborative partnership of the following healthcare organizations:

- Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians
- Mississippi Hospital Association
- Mississippi Osteopathic Medical Association
- Mississippi Primary Health Care Association
- Mississippi Rural Health Association
- Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program
- Mississippi State Medical Association
- Office of Mississippi Physician Workforce
- Office of Rural Health, Mississippi State Department of Health
- University of Mississippi School of Medicine
- William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine

For more information, contact OMPW at 601-815-0650 or via email at info@ompw.org.

Exhibit space will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. Click [here](#) to register.